THE SPICE OF LIFE

"THORMANBY"

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THE SPICE OF LIFE

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A MEDLEY OF MEMORIES

Wilmott Willmott Dixon

By "THORMANBY,"

Author of "The Lion of Lydboro'," "The Bric-a-Brac Papers," "Sporting Stories," "Kings of the Hunting Field," "Romances of the Road," etc., etc.

"Variety's the very spice of life
That gives it all its flavour."

Cowper—"The Task."

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I

A Boy in London

I do not claim for these reminiscences any merit but variety. I have seen life in many phases and what I remember of the Press, the Platform, the Bar, Alma Mater, the Stage and the old-time Bohemia, may possibly amuse readers who retain a lingering tenderness for days that are gone and enjoy the savour of memories which have some smack of age in them, some relish of the saltness of time.

I am not a Londoner born, but London and London journalism have absorbed the best and largest part of my life, and it is therefore round London that the bulk of my recollections cluster.

My father *was* a Londoner by birth, though his forbears hailed from Northumberland, and the earliest impressions I received of Cobbett's "Great Wen," were derived from certain gruesome paternal experiences. One of the most thrilling of these was his story of the guarding of his mother's coffin from body-snatchers. He and his brothers took it in turn, two and two, armed with bayonets and horse pistols, to watch the grave at night, and the weird picture which my imagination painted of these lonesome nocturnal vigils gives me " the creeps " even now when I recall it.

A still more sensational experience was that of one of my uncles, my father's eldest brother, who was kidnapped by sweeps when he was a child of six. His rescue was a miracle of happy chance. My grandfather was a solicitor, with offices in Boswell Court, long since pulled down to make room for the New Law Courts. Though short of

stature he was remarkably well-made and possessed of exceptional physical strength. On leaving his office one afternoon to walk home, he took a short cut through St. Giles's—a very low and unsavoury neighbourhood, in which no one who valued his purse and person would have cared to venture after dark. He was going at a brisk pace when he was startled to hear a voice calling piteously :

" Papa ! papa ! please, please come and take me home."

He looked sharply round and saw a ragged urchin, with tear-stained face, being hurriedly dragged up an alley by a rough-looking sweep. If it had not been for the voice my grandfather would have failed to recognise his own child—who had been stripped of all his good clothes and smeared with soot as a further disguise. In an instant he was at the sweep's heels and, gripping him by the neck, flung him to the ground. The fellow rose to his feet directly and bolted. There were no police in those days, and it was useless attempting to follow the ruffian into a labyrinth of courts which harboured a notoriously lawless population. My grandfather, therefore, contented himself with taking the weeping and terrified child by the hand, till a hackney coach was sighted, and under the friendly cover of that vehicle the disreputable little mite was smuggled home. I have often speculated on what my uncle's fate would have been had my grandfather not happened to pass at " the psychological moment." Possibly he would have been doomed to climb chimneys for a cruel master and become one of Elia's " young Africans of our own growth—those almost clergy imps, who sport their cloth without assumption : and from their little pulpits (the tops of chimneys) in the nipping air of a December morning, preach a lesson of patience to mankind."

With these pictures imprinted on my mind there is small wonder that London loomed to my boyish eyes as a city of horrors.

My own earliest recollection of London is associated with Apsley House. I was taken there by my father to see a sight which has never faded from my memory. What I saw was this. An old gentleman on horseback, attired in a plain blue frock-coat, with white waistcoat and trousers, followed by a mounted groom. There was a crowd outside the house, and, as this venerable gentleman with the aquiline nose passed through the gateway, every hat in that crowd was respectfully raised—as he rode slowly down Piccadilly, the hat of every passer-by was raised. The old gentleman looked straight in front of him, acknowledging every salute by lifting two fingers to his tall "beaver." It was the Duke. No need to ask "*What* Duke?" For five and thirty years, Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, had been *the* Duke to all Englishmen. To no Englishman before or since has the people paid homage, so prolonged, so spontaneous, so unflagging. He was one of the sights of London, taking rank as such before the Tower or Westminster Abbey. Every day, year after year, there was that crowd at Apsley House to pay its tribute of silent admiration and respect to the great soldier who taught us

> "What long-enduring hearts could do,
> In that world earthquake——Waterloo."

To me the Duke was more than a name. I had seen and known men who had fought under him. I had sat on the knee of the big, white-haired Colonel who led his Highlanders in the bayonet-charge that won Fuentes d' Onoro and in the last desperate rush that stormed the breaches of Badajoz. I was taught to ride by an old Sergeant of Dragoons—who had fought at Salamanca, Vittoria, Orthez, and Toulouse, and who always impressed upon me the solemn injunction never to "give the point" when charging in the front rank, because of the difficulty of disengaging your sword from your

opponent's body if you ran him through—a misadventure which had once happened to himself. And many were the long walks I had as a boy with a Waterloo veteran from whose lips I was never tired of hearing the story of that " day of onsets of despair." Over and over again have I heard that gallant Major describe the fierce but futile charges of Napoleon's magnificent cuirassiers upon the British squares, and he used to tell me that the bullets striking the cuirasses sounded like peas from a pea-shooter rattling against a window-pane. To hear the reverent awe with which these old soldiers spoke of the " great Duke," as a being far above common humanity, was a lesson in hero-worship which I have never forgotten.

A later recollection is that of being taken to the Albany by my father and of seeing Macaulay come out of his chambers there—an awe-inspiring sight to a young hero-worshipper dazzled by the glamour of the " Lays " and the " Essays " and the first volumes of the " History."

It was at this period of my boyhood that I met, at the house of a very old friend of my father's, two celebrities of widely different types—Dr. Livingstone and the afterwards notorious Sir John Dean Paul. I was but a small boy, and the grim, solemn visage of the great African traveller repelled me—but the handsome face, the portly figure and the genial manners of the baronet attracted me. He had been, as I know now, one of the most dissipated men about town of his time, but was supposed to have undergone genuine " conversion," and was then hand-in-glove with the Evangelical party of the Church of England—a shining religious light—he had prayers every morning at his Bank which all the clerks and employés were compelled to attend. He stands out as such a pleasant and attractive figure in my memory that I am loth to think of him as the colossal swindler—head of the great banking house of Strahan, Paul & Bates, whose gross misappropriation of trust

moneys brought ruin to so many households. Perhaps he was not as black as he was painted—even, it may be, more sinned against than sinning—though the judge who sentenced him to fourteen years penal servitude does not appear to have thought so.

Many years later, when he had long come out of prison and even his victims had almost forgotten him, he was strangely recalled to me. It was in Leicestershire.

The clergyman with whom I was staying was taking the duty one Sunday for a neighbouring rector, away on his holiday. I drove with him to the Church, a few miles distant. During the service I was struck by the remarkable appearance of an old gentleman in front of me. He was a tall man of dignified mien, with thick white hair and a long snowy beard. His devout attention to the prayers put most of the other worshippers to shame. A gentle-faced, sad-looking lady, much younger than he, was beside him—she found his places for him in the hymn-book and had evidently a loving eye to his comfort. When the service was over I asked the verger who the venerable gentleman was.

"Muster Simpson, Sir," he said—then, looking cautiously round him, added in a whisper:

"His real name is Sir John Dean Paul."

I stared and looked at him in surprise.

"Sir John Dean Paul! indeed! and who is the lady?"

"His daughter, sir. But it's not a many as knows who he is—though he's been here a good many years now, and them as *does* know keeps it to themselves."

In that quiet, remote little Leicestershire village the once dashing man-about-town—the shining light of Evangelicalism—the fraudulent banker, had hidden himself and his shame.

Another very early memory of London is my introduction to General Tom Thumb, most famous of dwarfs. It was at the Alhambra, I think, that I saw him in his Liliputian carriage, drawn by the tiniest ponies in the

world. His real name was Charles S. Stratten, his height then was twenty-five inches and his weight twenty-five pounds. No dwarf before or since has created such a *furore* in London, a *furore* which had tragic issues, for it was partly responsible for the suicide of Benjamin Haydon, the unfortunate historical painter whom the public would not take at his own valuation. The ovation given to Tom Thumb was at any rate the last straw to break the camel's back—for one of the latest entries in his Diary ran thus :— " They rush by thousands to see Tom Thumb. They push, they fight, they scream, they faint, they cry ' Help ' and ' Murder.' They see my bills and caravan but do not read them. Their eyes are on them, but their sense is gone . . . In one week 12,000 persons paid to see Tom Thumb, while only 133½ paid to see my ' Aristides ' ! "

I can recall, quite vividly, the uncanny feel of General Tom Thumb's tiny hand in mine, as he graciously shook hands with me. Some fifteen years later I saw the General again. This time he was accompanied by his wife who was an inch taller than her husband—though *he* was nearer to Heaven than when I saw him last " by the altitude of a chopine "—and their child, the tiniest atom of mortality I ever saw. There was another dwarf of the party—Commodore Nutt—taller than either of the Thumbs, but well under three feet. I was presented to Mrs. Tom Thumb with great ceremony by her husband as " an old friend " on the strength of my previous introduction to him as a boy.

To a slightly later period belongs my recollection of Albert Smith, then London's most popular entertainer. I did not see his " Ascent of Mont Blanc," which took the Town by storm, but a benevolent aunt, of the real old fairy god-mother sort, took me to see " The Overland Mail " which, like " Mont Blanc " was a moving diorama of painted scenes with humorous " patter." The latter was very funny and mirth-provoking, though at this distance of time I can only recall two of the jokes which

made the Egyptian Hall ring with the laughter of the delighted audience. Rushing about the deck of the liner in distracted search for an officer, on first coming aboard, Albert Smith collars one of the crew, who looks official, and says, "My good man, are you the mate?" In rich Hibernian brogue came the contemptuous answer, "Am I the *mate*? No! I'm the man that *cooks* it." And the other bore upon crinoline, which was then at the utmost limit of its absurd circumference. There was a Miss Brown among the entertainer's fellow passengers, the proportions of whose crinoline were balloon-like. At some Eastern port of call, I forget which, several of the passengers elected to go ashore in the extremely narrow native boats. Miss Brown was one of these adventurers. When she sat down in the boat her crinoline rose almost to her head and looked like a Brobdingnagian ruff. Asked how she felt, her reply was, "Oh! *so cold*, Mr. Smith!" the ladies blushed and the rest of the audience roared.

Albert Smith's untimely death plunged London into grief, and eclipsed the gaiety of Town. "Who can replace him?" people asked mournfully. But, of course, there came the inevitable successor and Albert Smith was soon forgotten. I suppose no one now reads his novels, "The Adventures of Mr. Ledbury," "The Scattergood Family," "Christopher Tadpole;" and yet for a brief space he was almost a rival of Dickens in popularity, and thousands laughed over his merry, if somewhat flippant, pages. In after years I knew an intimate friend of his who described him as being in private life one of the most charming and amusing of men. I only recall one trivial point in my friend's reminiscences of Albert Smith and it was that his favourite lines in English poetry were these from the "Lady of Shalott":

"All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott."

There could not have been much in common between Albert Smith and Edward Fitzgerald, and I do not know that they ever even saw one another—but it is odd that this stanza should have had a fascination for both of them.

From the time I was fourteen I was very keen on rifle-shooting. I was present at the first Wimbledon Meeting and saw the Queen fire the shot which opened the inaugural meeting of the National Rifle Association, and score a bull's eye at 400 yards with the carefully laid and sighted Whitworth rifle. Edward Ross, the first winner of the Queen's Prize, was a contemporary of mine at Trinity, Cambridge. He was but eighteen when he won that coveted distinction, and the notoriety thus early and suddenly gained, turned his head. He was a very majestic and haughty person in his mien. To see him stride clattering, in his big hob-nailed boots, up the centre of Trinity chapel of a Sunday evening, through the ranks of that "huge perspiring mass of white," with the slow and stately step of a monarch, glancing with supercilious arrogance at the surpliced throng on either side, was a ludicrous spectacle of human vanity. But much was forgiven to the first winner of the Blue Riband of Rifle Shooting.

The Wimbledon of my early recollections was a very different function from what it subsequently became. Lord Elcho, now the venerable Earl of Wemyss, was then the life and soul of those joyous gatherings. Wimbledon would not have been Wimbledon without his erect figure in the uniform of the London Scottish, who

were as proud of their Colonel as he was of his corps. And his charming wife took as much interest in the Meeting as her husband. She sat at the camp-fires, she applauded the shooting, she gave away the prizes, she charmed everyone who had the good fortune to meet her. Ah! those were the halcyon days of rifle shooting, when the great Wapenshaw was half-picnic, half-business, when Jenny Lind came down to sing in camp and riflemen vied with one another in making their tents as smart as Henley house boats. Sunday at Wimbledon was quite a Society function and I recall with a sigh those cunningly mixed iced drinks which Jennison used to supply—dreams of cool delicious suction! And then those lovely barmaids of Spiers and Pond, who were marched off every evening under the escort of a phalanx of stalwart and sedate policemen to the adjacent farm house where they slept—a bevy of picked beauties whom Kneller and Lely and Romney would have loved to immortalize on canvas!

Such were the frivolous surroundings of the great National Rifle-Meeting in those early days! No doubt it was all wrong. We ought to have taken our shooting more seriously. We should have striven to make the camp a model of Spartan simplicity and stern military discipline. But we didn't, and I think, perhaps, it was as well that we did not. For, after all, the object was to popularise rifle-shooting, and, to do that, it was needful to lead the citizen-soldier by flowery paths to the goal of duty. One had visions of the ancient Popinjay shoot of which so vivid a picture is given in "Old Mortality." And if rifle-shooting is ever to become a national pastime, a popular sport with all classes, I am not sure that it is wise wholly to ignore the social attractions and the convivial sporting note which made Wimbledon so fascinating in its early days.

In 1861 I had the unique experience of seeing the Thames on fire, *literally*. It was during the great Tooley Street Fire, the biggest known in London since the

historical one of 1666. The wharves which the flames attacked, contained the most combustible materials it is possible to conceive, among them large stores of oil which floated out in blazing masses on the river, till the water looked a moving sheet of flame. Seen at night, with all the buildings around lit up by the lurid glare, it was the wildest, weirdest, most wonderful and terrible spectacle I have ever witnessed. The fire raged *for a month*, and some lives were lost, among them that of James Braidwood, the able and distinguished head of the Fire Brigade, who was killed by the falling of a wall.

When I came up from Cambridge in 1866 to eat my dinners at the Temple, I was present at the great Reform Demonstration which culminated in the famous Hyde Park Riots. I saw the Procession, an imposing one, headed by a large cavalcade of mounted men, pass the Green Park in peaceful and orderly array, and I followed in its wake to the gates of Hyde Park. These had been closed by order of the Home Secretary, "Weeping Walpole," and were guarded by a strong force of police. The Reformers, led by Edmund Beales, M.A., denied the right of the Home Secretary to close the Park against their proposed meeting. Would they assert their claim to assemble in the Park by force? That was the burning question of the moment. As a matter of fact they had no such intention. Their leaders made a formal protest and peacefully withdrew to hold their meeting in Trafalgar Square. But the mob got out of hand, half a mile of railings was torn down and a miscellaneous rabble invaded the Park. I was carried on helplessly in the rush and found myself mixed up in a very lively mêlée, during which the police used their truncheons freely, whilst some of the roughs found formidable weapons in the broken railings. There was one Inspector there, I remember, mounted on a white horse, who made himself conspicuous by the savage manner in which he urged on his men to baton the crowd. Like a good many others, who had no real sympathy with the

rioters, I felt my blood boil at the needless brutality of the police. I had a narrow escape of getting my own head broken and was glad when I found myself at last well out of the scrimmage.

There was a panic in London that night and for some days after. People thought that there was a recrudescence of the old Chartist spirit and that something like a revolution was a-foot. It was expected that the Reformers would take possession of the Park by force on the following Saturday. Hundreds of special constables were sworn in. I was then in chambers in King's Bench Walk with an old Cambridge friend and we were both duly sworn in, under the impression, I think, that we were to enjoy a sort of glorified Town and Gown row, with no fear of Proctors before our eyes, and with the delightful consciousness of having the law for once on our side. But the fascinating prospect of a free fight under legalised conditions was speedily dispelled when the Magistrate explained to us our duties. These, I am ashamed to say, appeared to us so tame, prosaic and uninviting, not to say ignominious, that we incontinently pocketed our staves and badges and made for the Park to see the fun. In extenuation of what may seem to some a gross dereliction of duty, I should say that we had the firm intention of turning up at the muster-place if the outlook were really serious. But I shudder to think now what awful penalties we might have incurred as even temporary deserters. Fortunately, however, there was no need for the services of the "specials," the boneless Home Secretary, poor "Weeping Walpole," gave in at the last moment and in floods of tears withdrew his opposition. The Park was thrown open—there was no riot—thousands of men, drawn there by pure curiosity, lay idly and tranquilly smoking their pipes on the grass; there was not a single exciting incident. And yet the Household Troops were under arms and strong bodies of police were massed out of sight at various strategic

points. The so-called " Revolution," which had scared London, fizzled out like a damp squib.

It was the only time I ever was sworn in as a special constable and I was partly inspired to do so by a tradition in the family that one of my uncles, my father's youngest brother, had been similarly sworn in at the time of the great Chartist Terror of 1848, and in that capacity had stood shoulder to shoulder with Louis Napoleon—then a disreputable, discredited adventurer, whom no one took seriously—with apparently about as much chance of being Emperor of France as of being Grand Lhama of Tibet.

II

'Varsity Life in the Sixties

When one re-visits Alma Mater, after the lapse of, say, a decade, what strikes one most forcibly is the extreme youth of the undergraduates. They look mere boys. It is hard to realise that such juvenility could possibly have stamped *us* when *we* were *in statu pupillari*. Why, we were "*men*." We called ourselves "men" and we felt ourselves to be "men." But these smooth-faced striplings! Surely the undergraduate race must have degenerated since *our* time! Yet one has but to look at the photographs in which we indulged so lavishly at that fatuous age to realise that we, too, both looked and were very, very young what time we roamed those Academic groves.

As I look back down the dim perspective of the long-vanished years I see a picture which is at once strange and familiar. I see a callow hobble-de-hoy of eighteen, rough and strong, in obviously country-made clothes, sitting in the coffee-room of the "Eagle" at Cambridge —eyeing with something of shyness and distrust a rosy-faced, innocent-looking lad of about the same age, and occasionally jerking out a sentence to which there comes an equally jerky reply. At the other end of the long room, in easy chairs by the fire side, are two rather more than middle-aged gentlemen, the fathers of the two hobble-de-hoys. The first of these youngsters I recognise, not without difficulty, as myself, and one of the two elders is my father who has brought me with him to his old Alma Mater to see me fairly launched as a freshman at Trinity. Forty years before, he had sat under similar circumstances in that same room with *his* father;

and, having a proper Conservative respect for tradition, he had preferred to take up his quarters at the "Eagle" rather than at the more imposing "Bull." It was by coach that my grandfather and father had travelled to Cambridge, and, among relics preserved at home, I had often seen the pair of huge, thick, knitted stockings, or overalls, which, drawn over the boots, cased the legs up to the thighs, and so helped to keep the traveller warm when journeying on the box-seat in wintry weather.

Like myself, the rosy-faced boy was entered at Trinity. I found him very innocent and unsophisticated even from my point of view. I think he must have been the pet of his mother and sisters—there was something almost girlish in his pink and white complexion. I felt a touch of contempt for him *then*—but I don't *now*—for I feel sure that if he be still living, as I have no doubt he is, he is one of those fortunate persons who can look back upon their 'Varsity career with complacent satisfaction and mild pleasure untinged with any pang of regret. I never exchanged speech with him after that meeting at the "Eagle"—we nodded when we passed one another, that was all—for we became merged in two totally different "sets" and had nothing in common, beyond belonging to the same Boat Club—First Trinity. But he went steadily and blamelessly through the decorous curriculum of the wise and sober undergraduate who reverences discipline and never transgresses rules. I saw him some years later at the 'Varsity Cricket Match—with a lady, presumably his wife—"country parson" was writ large all over him—his face was still rosy, with a kind of faded innocence on it, not suggestive of disillusionment, but simply of the full-blown flower showing the first symptoms of going to seed. A manly growth of whiskers, fair as flax, hid half the smoothness of his cheeks. He had filled out, was stout and in good case. I conjectured that he was in the enjoyment of a fat living and that his lines were cast in pleasant places. And I had no contempt

for him *then*. I half envied his placid and peaceful life with its agreeable and unimpassioned recollections of the past. For I had thrown in my lot with wilder spirits—sworn to seek experience for themselves, careless what price they paid for it, so long as the seeking for it brought novelty and excitement and the strenuous joy of living—a way of life which tends to make one's recollections a very "mingled yarn."

I could hear now and then fragments of conversation from the armchairs at the fire side.

"Now, what do you think a fair sum for pocket money?"

"Well, I intend to allow my boy——"

Then the voice would drop to a confidential whisper and I could catch no more.

What a pity that fathers were not more frank with their sons in those days! To have no definite allowance assigned and to be told vaguely "to live like a gentleman without being extravagant" is a course so liable to misinterpretation—so capable of being construed by the son in quite a different sense from that implied by the father. There is one point about the relations between father and son *now* as compared with *then* which I view with the heartiest approbation and that is the greater familiarity of their intercourse. The barrier of reserve which kept father and son apart in my young days is now removed, and the son meets his father on terms of equality—as comrades and friends they can exchange confidences and the younger may profit by the experience of the elder. There was too much reverential awe—respect almost bordering upon fear—in the feelings with which a son regarded his father in the days of my youth. And as a consequence, too little genuine interchange of confidence. That is why I rejoice in the broader views now taken of parental ties and the delightful friendship between father and son which has taken the place of the old patriarchal despotism, with its exaction of absolute submission.

But I am digressing—let me get back to my muttons. It is mostly with the social and academic side of 'Varsity life that I shall concern myself here. Its sporting phases I have treated elsewhere ("Sporting Stories") and indeed I purposely bar sport and sportsmen from these pages, because I have dealt with them so exhaustively in other books.

I suppose it is only natural that, at any rate in his "fresher's" year, the undergraduate, who is not of that exceptionally wise and sober type I have referred to, should

"Ignore the proposition
That both time and money go."

But the stern censors who come down so heavily upon the poor wretch that gets himself entangled in debts which often hamper him for years afterwards, do not apportion the blame fairly. For, surely, the bulk of it should fall upon Alma Mater herself, who deliberately encourages—or at any rate did in my time—extravagance and reckless expenditure among her *alumni*. Looking back on my 'Varsity days now with eyes opened pretty wide by experience, I see college and town alike recognising but one great purpose in inviting the youth of England to their ancient seat of learning—to make as much money as possible out of the undergraduate, as quickly as possible and by any means, fair or foul.

Look at the monstrous system of credit as it was in my day. A foolish and reckless young fellow could run up debts to any extent in secret, without parent or guardian having the remotest idea of their existence. To be sure, there is a statute requiring every tradesman to send in to the college tutor the bill of every undergraduate immediately that it exceeds £5, on pain of being "discommuned." But that statute was a dead letter and the authorities winked at its evasion. Hotel keepers, livery-stable keepers, tobacconists, and a host of other tradesmen would simply have had to put up

their shutters in my time if that statute had been enforced. These gentry knew better than to present their little bills until they had got all they could out of their victims and the shadow of the degree was falling on the last term of the undergraduate's career. Then they showed their teeth and from obsequious purveyors turned into insolent duns.

The college tutors were supposed to stand to us *in loco parentis* and look after our morals and our general conduct. But how could a tutor with 160 men on his "side," as mine had, keep an eye on all of them? To do him justice he seldom pretended to be the guide, philosopher and friend that fond Paterfamilias and Materfamilias believed him to be. He was paid £18 a year for his nominal guardianship of each of his wards, thus making out of them some £3,000 a year, for which he did practically nothing in return. It was his custom to invite his pupils in batches of twenty at a time to a formal breakfast once a year. Oh! those tutorial breakfasts! What purgatories of boredom! Each pupil on his arrival at the commencement of term paid his tutor a complimentary visit, and at the close of each term made another formal call to obtain the necessary "exeat." During the interval, provided the pupil attended lectures, chapel and hall a certain number of times in the week, and was in his rooms every night before the stroke of midnight, he might go his own way and do whatever he pleased without his tutor's troubling his head about him.

But the tutor was (unwittingly, perhaps) a party to the bolstering up of the monstrous system of credit. The tradesmen who dealt in necessaries, such as tailors, haberdashers, grocers, chandlers, &c., were allowed to keep what were called "tutor's books." In these books was entered the sum total of the undergraduate's account with each of these tradesmen for the term, with the undergraduate's signature written against the amount, of which no particulars were given. Without

questioning the correctness of the account, the tutor merely transferred the figures to his own bill which he sent in at the close of each term to the pupil's father. The tradesman's account then became part and parcel of the tutor's college bill, the payment of which was securely guaranteed. For, no undergraduate was allowed to come back into residence whilst his tutor's bill remained unpaid. Paterfamilias, of course, supposed that all the items had received the tutor's sanction, and had no alternative but to pay or summarily cut short his son's University career. I have known a hairdresser—privileged, as "barber," to keep a "tutor's book"—to send in through the tutor such accounts as £8, £10, and even £15 *for a single term*, and they were put down in the tutor's college bill without inquiry or remonstrance! Conceive the average British father's feelings (for these were not cases of wealthy men) at seeing £10 set down under the item "barber" for one term of about eight weeks! Yet the tutor apparently saw nothing to call for any comment in the expenditure under this head! but considered such extravagant outlay on the ridiculous luxuries of the toilet as coming within the reasonable limit of "necessaries."

But the worst evil about "tutor's books" was this. It was a common practice in my time for even the most respectable tradesmen to bring their "tutor's books" for one's signature, with the amount faintly set down in *pencil*, and if you thought the sum looked too big, the accommodating tailor, or whatever he might be, suggested that he should rub out the pencil figures and insert half or two-thirds of the whole amount, to which falsified account you attached your signature. In this way both Paterfamilias and the tutor were hoodwinked, for each thought that the sum signed for was the *whole* amount due! And they were not undeceived till the final account was sent in at the end of the last term.

These "tutor's books" were an unmitigated swindle in my time, but there were reasons why the College

authorities saw fit to wink at the iniquity. All the moneys due to tradesmen who were allowed the privilege of keeping "tutor's books" were paid, as part of the tutor's college bill, into his private banking account, where he allowed them to lie for a full year, sometimes longer, before he disbursed them to the several creditors. In the case of a tutor at a large college, like Trinity, the moneys which thus passed through his hands amounted to many thousands of pounds. The interest on such a sum for a year must have been something very considerable. What became of it? It certainly did not go to the tradesmen, and the natural inference is that the tutor levied this toll as a commission for the privilege of including the tradesmen's accounts in the college bill. I do not say that every tutor took advantage of this very obvious way of adding to his income. But I know that the tradesmen regarded this toll as the tutor's perquisite, and, though they grumbled at having to pay it, they knew that it was worth their while to submit to the tax; for, supplying goods, as they were, to minors without the sanction of their parents or guardians, they could hardly feel safe unless covered by the broad shield of the tutor's sanction, implied, if not expressed, by his admitting the account into his College bill.

And then there was a host of minor ways in which one was fleeced by the College itself. For example, there were the fines—every undergraduate who came into the College after ten at night was fined one penny and after eleven two-pence. Yet by the rules every student was permitted to be out till twelve. He was therefore committing no offence in being out *till* twelve. Then why fine him? There was no question of discipline involved. Then why inflict a penalty for doing what the College openly countenanced? Then there was the charge of a half-penny on every letter delivered in College—a preposterous impost. These fines in my time were the perquisite of the head porter who died during

my residence and left a fortune of nearly £15,000 ! This opened the eyes of the dons—they really thought that a servant of the College who could feather his nest so *very* comfortably must have been getting more pickings than he was entitled to. So the head porter was deprived of these perquisites and was thenceforward paid a fixed salary of £250 a year.

The chapel clerk—nicknamed "Mephistopheles"—why I can't remember, for he was on oily, saponaceous person, bearing small resemblance to Faust's attendant demon—charged seven and sixpence for every surplice and exacted half a crown from every man who attended the eleven o'clock chapel on sacrament Sunday without remaining to the Communion service. These extortionate charges were presumably the perquisites of "Mephistopheles" and his myrmidons.

But where we were most shamefully, or shamelessly, fleeced was in the matter of food. The dinner in hall at Trinity in my time was a byword in the University for everything that a dinner in hall should *not* be.

> "Think you that to a fool I've such affinity
> As to consent to dine in hall in Trinity ?"

exclaims Augustus in George Otto Trevelyan's "Horace at the University of Athens." And in the same brilliant skit Decius Mus makes these comments in his public oration—

> "We've a hall-steward, a portentous swell,
> Who in his choker looks uncommon well.
> But no one can perceive, as I'm a sinner,
> A very marked improvement in the dinner.
> We still consume, with mingled shame and grief,
> Veal that is tottering on the verge of beef ;
> Veal void of stuffing, widowed of its ham,
> Or the roast shoulder of an ancient ram."

We paid one shilling and elevenpence for a dinner which any ordinary eating-house would have supplied

for eighteen pence or even less. Fish, soup and cheese were extras which we could have by "sizing" for them —*i.e.*, paying kitchen prices. The most trifling relish was an extra to be paid for accordingly. For example, onion sauce with shoulder of mutton was a luxury for which two-pence was charged. Mustard, salt, and, I think, pepper were *not* regarded as extras! We were indeed supplied with "swipes" to wash down our plain joint and plainer sweets, but this modest beverage was so abominably bad that we had invariably to "size" for college ale at two-pence a glass, the price we should have paid for much better ale at one of Spiers' and Pond's refreshment rooms! Consequently about a fifth of the Trinity men of my time found it much pleasanter to dine at one of the hotels or restaurants; and, though they had to pay for their dinner in hall whether they partook of it or not, they calculated that, deducting what they would have been charged for "sizings," they did not in the long run pay very much more than they would have done if they had dined in hall.

Now, Alexis Soyer, the famous French cook and caterer, who took in hand the reformed methods of feeding our troops in the Crimea, offered to contract with Trinity to supply a much better dinner, than was then provided, for one shilling and fourpence a head, but the offer was refused and the consequence was that our head cook made his £2,000 or £3,000 a year and kept his carriage and pair! He had the cheek once to drive up to the college gates in that vehicle, but this was too much for the Master and Fellows to stand—the line must be drawn somewhere, and they drew it at the cook driving to his duties in state. When you come to think of it—the cook's profits must have been enormous. Six hundred men dined daily in hall—or paid for their dinner if they did not eat it—on the dinner of each one of them he must have made a clear profit of at least four pence, or, say, ten pounds per diem on the lot! No

wonder he could afford to keep his carriage and pair and enter his son (as he did) at Christ Church, Oxford.

And then there was that hall steward! His name was Coggins—he was a large, flabby, pasty-faced man, attired in full evening dress. It was his duty to listen to any complaints about the dinner. The wretched man's life was rendered a burden to him. The hall rang with incessant shouts of "Coggins! Coggins!" No sooner had he rushed to one complainant than from half a dozen different parts of the hall came impatient shouts of "Coggins! Coggins!" The unfortunate creature was driven frantic, the perspiration streamed from his face, as he hurried breathlessly from table to table to answer one imperative summons after another.

"Now, Mister Coggins! *do* you, I ask, *do* you consider this beef fit for a civilized person to eat?" and his attention would be called to a slightly under-done slice of meat.

"Well, really, Sir, I—I—don't know—some gentlemen like their meat a trifle under-done."

"Under-done, yes, but not *raw*—not *raw*, Mr. Coggins!"

And so the unhappy hall steward was baited and badgered until he must have been inclined to throw up his thankless office in despair or disgust.

The same exorbitant prices were charged for everything which the undergraduate had from the kitchens and the butteries—so that if one wanted to give a breakfast it was very much cheaper to order it from one of the hotels or restaurants.

We were no better off in the matter of education. Alma Mater did hardly anything for us. All the real and effective teaching of the University was done by private tutors who were paid by their pupils and not by the colleges. The payment of a "coach" was a severe tax upon a poor man—eight or ten guineas a term—but if he could not afford to pay it he was hopelessly out of the race. His college would do nothing for him and it was

impossible for him to hold his own against richer competitors who could afford to secure the services of the best tutors. In the evidence given before the Select Committee on the Oxford and Cambridge Education Act in 1867, Mr. Robey, speaking of his own College (St. John's), said that " not above £200 or £300 a year of the whole revenue of about £30,000 a year, was applied directly to the payment of instruction ! "

That is how things were in my time. But I hope, for the credit of Cambridge, that vast improvements have been made since then—there was certainly room for them.

I wonder if the tradesman's " tout " is still an institution at my old Alma Mater. All the leading tradesmen then had " touts " whose business it was to lure the simple undergraduate into giving orders for articles which he did not want and had no possible use for. They were agreeable, well-dressed fellows these touts, with a fine gift of flattery : they could adapt themselves to the moods and whims of every customer—could preserve a respectful and serious demeanour with one—retail a spicy piece of scandal or a risky story, or even give a racing tip to another. They had an extraordinarily clever knack of extracting orders, and one was often horrified to find how one's tailor's bill, for example, had mounted up in consequence of these visits of the tout.

The most intensely respectable tradesmen saw nothing infra dig. in employing these touts. And then there were the lesser harpies with which the town swarmed. They were, for the most part, in the fancy trade, and to all the wiles of their betters they added the subtle seductions of feminine charms—a pretty daughter or a handsome wife being part of their stock-in-trade. Of course the morals of these decoy ducks were unimpeachable : but they were dangerous sirens in more ways than that of coaxing young simpletons out of their money. They were " out for blood " these coy coquettes—the single ones I mean. To marry a 'Varsity man was their

ambition, and they succeeded far oftener than outsiders would suppose. I think I could count up pretty nearly a score of my contemporaries at Cambridge who married girls beneath them in station ; and who knows what was the number of narrow escapes which were discreetly hushed up, not without pecuniary *solatium* to the deserted damsel ? I am sure that fond mothers and sisters at home would have been startled and disgusted had they known to what an extent a considerable section of undergraduates associated with the wives and daughters of the smaller tradesmen and what serious entanglements were the result of these intimate relations.

The attitude of the University in my time towards women was as ridiculous as that of the proverbial ostrich to its pursuers. Alma Mater professed neither to recognise nor tolerate the presence of females within her hallowed precincts. Newnham and Girton as yet were not : and Tennyson's fantastic picture of

> " Prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans
> And sweet girl graduates in their golden hair,"

was laughed at as the wild dream of an irresponsible visionary. The idea of married dons provoked howls of derision, and the academic mind revolted in mingled horror and disgust from the thought of introducing the terrors of domestic life—nursery maids and perambulators and squalling children—into the tranquil haunts of learning. From the very earliest times the Universities have shown a rabid aversion to women. Not more rigid precautions were taken to keep Satan out of Paradise than were adopted to keep women, especially young women, out of the quiet retreats consecrated to celibacy and study.

One of the earliest and drollest of these precautionary measures is to be found among the old statutes of Peterhouse and the ideas which it suggests are so quaint and humorous that I shall make no apology for quoting some clauses :—

"We enact, by way of prohibition, that no washerwomen, more especially young ones—if men can be found expert in the washing of heads—shall enter the chambers of the scholars either openly or secretly, under any pretext or colour whatever: but that if any female of their relations or any other honest females, should desire to hold counsel, conversation or discourse with them for any honourable and lawful reasons, the interview shall take place in the hall, or in some other respectable place, in the presence of some other scholar, or at least some honest servant of the house, if any one can be easily obtained, the conversation being carried on in this manner discreetly, which matter we lay upon their own consciences. And we further enact that the scholars' vestments to be cleansed by means of laundresses shall be carried to them to be cleansed by one of the sworn attendants of the said college, whenever it may be necessary, and afterwards be brought back again, when cleansed, by him or some other—unless, perchance, they may have a male washer. But if the scholars stand in need of having their heads washed or their beards shaved, that the Master shall provide a person for that purpose—the porter, if possible, or some other servant of the College, who may be both able and willing to perform both offices. It is better certainly that all these matters be performed by males than that by the coming in of women anything should by any means happen to the scandal of the whole College."

One would scarcely have cared to converse with a female relation or to hold counsel, conversation or discourse with "any other honest female" even for "honourable and lawful reasons" with the college porter standing by as the representative of decorum! But as to the head-washing and shaving by women, I think the authorities were wise to put their veto on that practice. For had it been still retained, I suspect that the barber's bills—which as I have already shown were quite formidable enough in my day—would have

assumed appalling proportions. It is noteworthy, however, that there evidently *were* women-barbers in those days. An attempt was made some twenty years ago to start a Lady Barbers' Association. There were two rival establishments in Chancery Lane. For a brief space there was a rush of custom. It was a pleasing novelty to be shaved and shampooed by pretty girls. But it must soon, I think, have dawned upon even the vainest of males that a man could not well cut a more foolish and ridiculous figure than when, with head fixed and chin lathered, he gazed sentimentally into the eyes of a fair razor-holder. There was the danger too, of her being provoked to merriment with possibly disastrous results to the chin she was operating upon. The lady barbers soon vanished and their place knew them no more.

It is easy to trace to such old statutes as the one I have quoted, the origin of that peculiar type of womanhood of which the only extant specimens are college bedmakers and Temple laundresses—a type which combines in beautiful harmony the minimum of cleanliness with the maximum of ugliness. This subject was funnily treated in one of the clever brochures which came out during my academic career; "The Diary of Samuel Pepys, Esq., While an Undergraduate at Cambridge." The first entry in the "Diary" runs thus:—

"18th.—Put on my cap and gown for the first time, in which looked mighty handsome, and Lord, how ugly I was yesterday and how fine to-day! And so to the shop of one Swan an upholsterer, a shrewd understanding person, and there bought a table and some chairs and a desk—for I am wholly resolved to apply myself to study in good earnest. Thence to my rooms to confer with my bedmaker and her help, a mighty pretty creature, whom I did chuck under the chin to my great content (1)."

To which the Editor appends the following note:—

(1)—Either Pepys must have been a bad judge of

beauty, or a *lusus naturæ* in the shape of a good-looking bedmaker must have been in existence in his time ; for that the race was then, as now, ill-favoured, the following scene from a comedy of the period will show :—

ACT II

Scene 3

Tutor of College seated in a study : to him enter two young but very ill-favoured girls, candidates for the office of Assistant Bedmaker, with their mother, an old hag.

Tutor — How now ! Are these the girls ?

Mother — They are, good sir.
The one Amelia Sophonisba Gamp,
Of whom in bygone years you may have heard.

Tutor — (*Favourably impressed.*) What, the late lamented Sarah Gamp ?

Mother — I' faith the same. The other Elizabeth. Named after her godmother, one Betsey Prig.

Tutor — Ha ! good. But say—what qualifications have they ?

Mother — Amelia, by bounteous Providence, is singularly blest,
Her eyes nor match in colour nor in size ;
With one she squints ; the other, fixed,
Confronts with glassy stare the horrified beholder.
Her nose, broken in infancy, a rugged line presents,
While her young voice turning from childish treble
A wrong turn took, and mocks the raven's croak.
Elizabeth by erysipelas, that fell disease, assailed,

With blush perpetual marks the modest maid.
Her figure shapeless doth, say some, resemble a woolsack girt about the middle with a single cord.

TUTOR Ha ! (*Aside.*) So well recommended, they will want
High wages—and yet I must not lose them. Umph !
I will endeavour to depreciate their merits.
(*Aloud*). This erysipelas on one cheek only
Lays its pimpled paw.

MOTHER Alack ! it is so ;
But we hope, by dint of careful management,
To make th' eruption spread.

TUTOR Pr'ythee what grounds
For this ?

MOTHER An' please your honour, we propose
A potent philtre to apply, which shall the skin
With multitudinous spots incarnadine,
Making the pale one red.

TUTOR So, so ! I twig.
Fuller investigation I would make.
To-morrow at the self-same hour attend me here.

(*Exeunt Omnes.*)

OLD PLAY.

My own bed-maker on D staircase, New Court, was a lachrymose lady, with a swivel eye, of uncertain honesty and pessimistic temperament, on whose mournful visage I never saw a smile except when I paid her the traditional guinea for " gowning " after I took my degree in the Senate House.

There may have been some deep purpose in forcing young men daily to contemplate these repulsive forms

of womanhood. In the olden time it may possibly have had the effect of inducing scholars to look with resignation on the enforced celibacy of the monastery. But I doubt whether it ever had that effect in my time, and I believe that now the authorities have come to the conclusion that the duties of bedmakers are more pleasantly and efficiently performed by decent, clean, well-favoured women of middle-age, than by the wrinkled and unclean old harpies that I remember.

No doubt the contiguity of Newnham and Girton has done much to modify the views of the dons as to the desirability of excluding female society from the University. The married don is no longer looked upon as a traitor to his order and treated as a pariah, and Alma Mater, perhaps, recognises *at last* that woman's society may be an important adjunct to man's education. It at any rate softens and improves his manners. I don't think I have ever seen a more ludicrous sight than that of the don of my days being introduced by an undergraduate to a party of ladies, his sisters or cousins, in the May Term. The bashful man always makes a pitiable exhibition of himself under such conditions, but the bashful don (and all dons were bashful then) looked particularly fatuous and foolish. There was an eminent Fellow and Assistant Tutor at Trinity known as "Blushing Billy," in whose agonies when suddenly confronted with these gay and charming summer invaders of collegiate life, we took a cruel delight—especially those of us who had been "gated" for irregular attendance at his lectures. But I suppose there are no "Blushing Billys" now.

The dominant figure at Trinity, and indeed in the University, in the sixties was our Master, the omniscient Whewell, generally known as "Billy Whistle," because some facetious don had declared that the name was easier to whistle than to pronounce. He was a man of colossal physique—with massive head and rugged face—a deep voice and a harsh, repellent manner. I had the

misfortune to incur his wrath, and was consequently brought into unpleasantly close relations with him. A very intimate friend of mine, had rooms in the Old Court overlooking the Fellows' Garden. We were both fond of pistol-shooting, and indeed had acquired something of a reputation for fine markmanship. The saloon pistol was our favourite weapon, and the walls of our rooms were riddled with bullets. I was alone in his rooms one day and fired a shot at a sparrow on one of the trees—the bullet, glancing off the branch of a tree, struck the conservatory seventy yards away and broke a pane of glass. The Master and his wife (Lady Affleck) were in the conservatory at the time. Now I need hardly tell anyone who knows anything about saloon-pistols that at that distance the missile discharged from it would be practically innocuous. That it should have had force enough to break the glass was astonishing, but that it could have harmed any person that it hit was a preposterous supposition. However, it was thought a very heinous offence, especially as firearms were not allowed in College. I was brought up before the Master and Fellows in solemn conclave, charged with having endangered the life of the Master by the discharge of a bullet from a firearm in close proximity to his person. When the saloon pistol with its tiny cartridge was produced, the dons were amazed—they had fully expected to see a projectile at least the size of an Enfield rifle bullet. It was very funny to see them handling the little weapon and minutely examining the cartridge. I had to explain how and in what direction I fired the pistol. Cope, the eminent Platonist, whose Plato lectures I was attending, thought to do me a good turn and pointed out very gravely that, according to my description and to the diagram before them, the barrel of the pistol was so directed that the bullet in its straight course must have passed over the conservatory. Whereupon Matthison, the Senior Fellow and Tutor, who disliked the Platonist, promptly came down upon him:

"Why, Cope, do you suppose that when a bullet is fired from a rifle or pistol it goes on for ever in a straight line and never gravitates to the earth?"

Cope got very red and was silenced. I have not the slightest doubt that he *did* think as Matthison suggested, and, being no mathematician, ignored the law of gravitation. After a severe reprimand from the Master—I can hear the rough, harsh tones of his voice even now—I was sentenced to be gated at nine o'clock for the Term and my pistols were confiscated. It was the May Term, worse luck to it, and I was not residing in College, so that the privation was great.

Whilst Lady Affleck was living, there were receptions at the Master's Lodge, to which privileged undergraduates were invited. They were generally known as "Whewell's Perpendiculars," and were the most appallingly stiff and formal functions it is possible to imagine. Everyone had to stand—hence the name "Perpendiculars"—there may have been some kind of refreshment, probably there was, for those who had the courage to look for it—few ever did—one was expected to stay an hour, then make one's formal bow to Lady Affleck and the Master and retire. I was never invited after the affair of the pistol and was devoutly thankful to escape the horrible infliction.

And yet, rough, harsh, unsympathetic and repellent as he was, Whewell had a hidden spring of tenderness in his heart. No one suspected it and it came, I think, as a surprise even to those who knew him best—after Lady Affleck's death (she retained her title on her second marriage, her first husband was Sir Robert Affleck, Bart.). The first time he preached after his bereavement he touched upon the hallowed ties of friendship and drew a picture of the model friend and companion, and the awful sense of loneliness which the loss of such companionship left in a man's life. Everyone knew that he was alluding to his wife, though he never actually passed from the abstract to the concrete. The

stillness in the chapel was profound and oppressive. It was the most painful and pathetic revelation of the sacred secrets of a human soul. To see that great, strong, rugged figure battling with an emotion which his will was powerless to control—to hear the big, deep voice break and falter as he dwelt on each noble and tender trait in the character of that ideal friend and companion whom we knew to be the wife he had loved and admired —to watch the heroic effort to struggle through to the end with the tribute which he felt it a bounden duty thus to render publicly—were things that touched us all to the heart. I doubt whether there were many eyes among the listeners that did not fill with tears—for there was something profoundly moving in this display of feeling from a man whom we had been wont to regard as too stern and lofty to be affected by the tenderer human emotions.

Next to that sermon the most striking discourse I ever heard in Trinity Chapel was Lightfoot's funeral sermon on the Master himself, who was killed by a fall from his horse. "Joey" Lightfoot, as we affectionately, if somewhat irreverently, called the future Bishop of Durham; was not an orator—his personal appearance was singularly unimpressive; but for his dress you might have mistaken his squat clumsy figure for that of a very ordinary country farmer—he had a strong cast in one eye, his voice was weak and unmusical, he had no elocutionary art or grace——but I will venture to say that everyone who heard that funeral sermon will admit that it was the finest he ever heard in his life.

After Whewell, Charles Kingsley was the most notable figure at Cambridge in my time. Inferior to the Master of Trinity as an intellectual force, and not to be compared with him in learning and acquirements, Kingsley was infinitely more popular. He was then Professor of Modern History and his lecture-room was crowded with enthusiastic admirers. I attended his lectures on the French Revolution for my professorial certificate; I

cannot, however, say that I retain any distinct recollection of them. But he did this—he introduced me to Carlyle, and under the glamour of the mighty Scot I forgot Kingsley—he was overshadowed by the greater genius. I have a vague impression that Kingsley was picturesque and piquant, but it is mainly as the interpreter of Carlyle that he lingers in my memory. His lectures were always interesting, but his elocution was imperfect. He had a difficulty in sounding his " r's," and the closing sentence of his course on the " Roman and the Teuton " was always quoted as " Old Wine and young Women were the Wuin of Wome." But the defect was not really so pronounced as that. His alert, agile, vigorous figure, suggestive in its every line of almost aggressive activity and motion—his keen, manly combative face—his utterly unclerical pepper and salt suit—all come before me vividly as I call up his ghost from the past. But my admiration of him, strange to say, is far greater *now* than it was *then* when his personality was constantly before me in the flesh.

There were some eccentric dons in my time, as I suppose there always are. There was one—the then incumbent of the Round Church, which I believe shares with the Temple Church the proud distinction of being the only ecclesiastical edifice of that shape in England. He was an enormous man, like Ben Jonson, of " mountainous belly," and his feats of eating and drinking had made him notorious as a king of gourmands. We used to watch him in hall on feast-days with fascination. He would scoop a whole dish of larks on to his plate without thought of his neighbour—he would prize open the crust of a fruit tart and spoon out its contents, leaving the crust untouched and the tart apparently intact—a snare to the unwary guest who followed him. He was reported to have consumed a whole leg of Southdown mutton at a sitting—all to his own knife and fork—and to have drained two quart tankards of ale in succession without drawing a breath ! Exploits almost worthy of Pantagruel!

Another eccentric, of a kindlier and worthier sort, was Beamont, who, after ten years in Jerusalem as Head of the College there, returned to Cambridge and took his place among the Fellows of Trinity. He was a man of simple, unconventional instincts, and he acted upon them without reflection. As a consequence, he frequently shocked Mrs. Grundy's ideas of propriety and scandalized his prudish fellow dons by acts of eccentricity which took their breath away. One such act was his bringing as his guest to the high table in hall on Sunday, Deerfoot, the famous Indian runner whose exploits were then the talk of the sporting world. When taken to task by the Master and Fellows, he maintained that, as a Fellow, he had a right to invite any "distinguished person" to be his guest at the high table—there was nothing in the rules of the College to define the nature of the distinction which qualified a stranger to be the guest of a Fellow; and, therefore, being himself an enthusiastic admirer of athletic prowess, he was perfectly justified in inviting the greatest runner in the world, who in the palmy days of Greece would have been exalted almost into a demi-god. There was no doubt that he was legally within his rights in extending the hospitality of the Fellows' table to Deerfoot, but, seeing that his brother dons were shocked, he, like the good-hearted fellow he was, promised that he would not wilfully shock their prejudices again. During my last year in residence, I had rooms in Green Street, and one day when I was at lunch with my "old and trusty fere," Charley Absolom, I was surprised to receive a visit from Beamont. He explained that I was in his parish (he was incumbent of a church close by) and that he made a point of visiting all his parishioners. He had a great admiration for Charley, who was then at the zenith of his fame—a double Blue, in the Eleven, and representative of the 'Varsity in the sports, as hundred yards sprinter, weight putter and long jumper. He stayed and had lunch with us and ended by inviting us both *to tea!* I went, but

nothing would induce Charley to go. It was just as well that he did not, for I am sure if he had been there nothing could have restrained our risibility. It was the funniest function I ever took part in at Cambridge. I naturally expected from what I knew of Beamont that a "tea" with him would be something refreshingly unconventional. But it was otherwise. Two prim elderly spinsters took the head and foot of the table, with tea and coffee equipage before them. There were some dozen or more undergraduates, a very mixed lot, and a benevolent doctor who had a reputation for the readiness with which he granted "œgrotats."

An "œgrotat" I should explain for the benefit of the uninitiated, is a doctor's certificate to the effect that one is not well enough to attend lectures, chapel or hall. One consequently was, in my time, privileged to have dinner sent to one's rooms from the kitchens, and as it was always sufficient for two, one could invite a guest to share one's solitude. This kindly old doctor was hardly ever known to refuse his certificate, and in the May Term, armed with this warranty of indisposition, one could slip from one's rooms, take a trap and drive out into the country for the day. So long as one was back in one's rooms before 10. p.m., no inquiries were made as to the genuineness of the indisposition.

I don't know why Beamont should have asked those two elderly spinsters to preside. He was evidently in mortal terror of them and they threw a wet blanket over the proceedings, which consisted mainly of vapid, interjectional talk, and an elaborate pretence of being interested in photographs of Rome and the Holy Land! Everyone was solemnly asked to sing! and everyone as solemnly declined. Our host appeared to be all the time on tenter-hooks. He would have liked some manly talk with several of us, on cricket, or athletics, or boating, but in the presence of those awful dragons of propriety, he was dumb on all subjects in which either we or he took the faintest interest. A bowl of negus was produced

just before we left—another concession to elderly maidenhood! It was not a beverage that commended itself to most of us, and I think our host must have felt that it was a mockery of conviviality to offer it. Why did he thus sacrifice himself on the altar of propriety? I have often wondered. Perhaps he felt that some penance was due from him for those acts of defiant unconventionality in which he had once indulged. And yet—will it be believed? I actually went a second time to one of those awful "*teas!*" I was beguiled by the hope of something different from my first experience. But everything was precisely the same! After that I gave Beamont up as hopeless. His end was tragic. He dropped dead in his seat in the Fellows' stalls during Sunday evening service in the College Chapel.

An eccentric of a different and much less reputable type was a notorious sporting Fellow of John's, who used to scandalize the dons of the College by announcing his return from Newmarket, usually at a most uncanonical hour and in *very* "merry guise," with wild notes from his long coach horn or "yard of tin," which woke the echoes of the silent quads. There was a well-known inn dear to sportsmen, just outside Newmarket, kept by a comely widow, who was always effusive in her welcome to sporting members of the 'Varsity, and was by them held in high esteem. But why should I keep back *her* name? Every undergraduate who went racing must at some time have felt a *tendresse* for charming Nellie Arber? For years this sporting Fellow of John's courted the buxom hostess, always associated in my mind with plump and kindly Mrs. Lupin of the Green Dragon, whom Mark Tapley finally led to the altar. And at last, when both of them were of mature age, they married. Thereafter the quads of John's no longer rang to the midnight blast of that most convivial, unacademical *horn*.

Then there was a delightful old Fellow of King's, a sportsman and convivialist of the first water, who had

been a noted cricketer in his day and whom I often met at cricket matches in the adjacent villages—particularly Bottisham and Abingdon. He was an immense favourite with the farmers, and was always called upon after the supper to sing "Little Billee," his one song, which was invariably encored, and sometimes the encore was greeted so vociferously that he was forced to give it a third time. Those village cricket matches were among the most delightful experiences of my May Terms. There was always plenty of fun besides the cricket, and the farmers were capital company at the jolly suppers with which we wound up the day. Sometimes their comely wives and pretty daughters added a happy attraction to the feast. I recall particularly two or three ripping matches at Abingdon, where Mortlock, the banker, was our host. We had supper under a magnificent chestnut in his grounds, one of the finest trees, I should think, in England. Mrs. Mortlock and other ladies graced the banquet with their presence, and we had a royal spread. Then came the songs and with one consent the jolly farmers shouted for "Muster Evans" and "Little Billee." And the merry Fellow of Kings, after his usual quaint and humorous apology for his deficient vocal powers, struck up Thackeray's whimsical ballad which was received with rapturous applause. Then, as a stereotyped wind-up, "Muster Evans" proposed the health of the Ladies, and his speech was always as funny and mirth-provoking as his singing. I have very pleasant recollections of that jovial Fellow of King's and the convivial scenes associated with his presence.

We had an amiable Chaplain at Trinity whom everyone liked and of whom nearly everyone who knew him had some funny story to tell. Robins (that was not his real name, but it will serve) was fond of his port, but unfortunately was not gifted with a very strong head. He was quite conscious of this fact and it was his habit to leave his convives in the Combination Room, where the

dons took their *vinum cum dignitate* after hall, about a quarter of an hour before the Chapel bell rang, and walk up and down between the Clock Tower and the end of the Chapel to cool his flustered brain. One evening as he was pacing this secluded spot, he was spied from the windows of a man who " kept " on the staircase overlooking the Chaplain's walk. With this person was a friend—the cleverest amateur ventriloquist, I suppose, in England. They put out the light when Robins' back was turned and as the chaplain came back in his self-imposed penance, there came from above him in a mysterious whisper: " Robins ! " The Chaplain started, stopped, and looked wildly round. Just as he was moving off again, convinced that his ears had deceived him, there came another mysterious call: " Robins ! " apparently from just in front of him. " Yes, yes," exclaimed the excited Chaplain, " What is it ? " No reply — the silence was unbroken. The Chaplain, evidently perplexed, resumed his walk. Then from the windows of the Chapel came the uncanny voice—" Robins ! " The bewildered Chaplain looked up, stood listening, and was about to move away again, when from behind him came the whispered call, " Robins ! " " Yes, I am here, what is it ? " he cried, moving in the direction of the voice. But the oracle was dumb. When next the voice summoned him from the dim distance—" Robins ! "—the Chaplain fairly turned tail and bolted for his rooms, convinced that the port he had drunk was playing strange tricks with his hearing.

Poor Robins would frequently fall sound asleep during the reading of the lessons, and indeed the monotonous sing-song in which they were recited by the scholars was enough to super-induce somnolence in more wakeful birds than the Chaplain. When the lesson came to an end, the silence would be broken by a sonorous snore from Robins —placidly reposing with head thrown back and mouth open—and he would have continued to

slumber had not some good natured scholar stepped down and gently roused him. The audible start he gave and the look of utter bewilderment that succeeded, before he grasped the situation and picked up his place in the prayer book, made a little comedy which pleasantly relieved the tedium of " keeping chapel ! "

But the eccentricities of the dons of my time were but trivial compared with some, the memory of which was still green when I was up. I will give one instance in point. There is a pleasant village about ten miles from Cambridge called Melbourn—a village dear to driving undergraduates in my time, where I have quaffed many a cheerful tankard under the hospitable roof of old Joel King, mine host of the Rose and Crown, within range of the bright glances and beaming smiles of his three pretty daughters. In company with two or three congenial souls, I have passed a week or two there in the " Long," cricketing, fishing, driving and making merry with the farmers and their wives and daughters, and have found that there were pleasures in Arcadia worth plucking—though they were apt soon to cloy upon the taste. Well, at Melbourn there were several persons then living who had been eye-witnesses of one of the most extraordinary feats ever undertaken by a grave and reverend don. The hero of the exploit was the Reverend Joseph Blizzard, D.D., Fellow and Tutor, and Vice-Master of Peterhouse, who was so extremely good natured that the men of his college declared that there was nothing he would not do to oblige them.

Now one day, at a hunt breakfast given by the Master of the Cambridgeshire Hounds, a Mr. Wilson, of Peterhouse, having boasted of the influence which the undergraduates of that foundation had over the erratic doctor, a celebrated old Cantab and sportsman, Mr. J. Goddard, of Maida Hall, in the Isle of Ely, offered to bet that he would name a request which Dr. Blizzard would not grant, even to one of his favourite pupils. Mr. Wilson challenged him to mention the nature of the request.

Thereupon Mr. Goddard offered to stake £500 to the £250 of any one member of Peterhouse, "that he, the said member, could not, with all his influence over that extraordinary personage, Dr. Blizzard, prevail upon him to undertake the following interesting feat——viz., to ride from St. Mary's Church, Cambridge, to the village of Melbourn, which is eight miles on the London road, upon man-back, in the space of two hours, allowing him a fresh man every half-mile, selected from any county, and stationed on the road for that purpose." The wager was accepted by Mr. Wilson, and put down formally in writing in the precise words I have quoted above.

To the intense relief and delight of the Peterhouse men, the Doctor joyously consented to do his part towards winning the wager.

As the great clock of St. Mary's chimed eight on the morning of Friday, October 8th, 1825, the Reverend Dr. Blizzard, in full puff wig and clerical shovel-hat, appeared in front of the Senate House where an immense and enthusiastic crowd was assembled. Sixteen powerful youths had been selected by Mr. Wilson from all parts. The Doctor mounted the back of the first "horse," Ned Nicholls of Huntingdon, renowned for his muscular strength. Fortunately the Doctor was a light weight and the half mile was covered in quick time. All went well at first, till the Doctor, who was no chicken, began to get tired and had to rest a few minutes between each mount, so that at the close it became a very near thing indeed. For the last half mile, Sam Gill of St. Neots, a famous runner and athlete, who was living near Royston in my time and who told me what he remembered of the story, was the last "horse" selected. Sam, in his anxiety to get the Doctor to the goal in time, stumbled and fell heavily, breaking his own nose and severely shaking his rider. The accident happened about a quarter of a mile from Melbourn and was nearly proving fatal to Mr. Wilson's chance of winning his wager.

However, Sam managed to get on his feet, and, though the blood was streaming from his broken nose, pluckily bore the Doctor into Melbourn in triumph with just *half a minute to spare!* amid such a scene of excitement as Melbourn probably never witnessed before or since.

After that, Leslie Stephen's feat of plunging into the the river up to his arm-pits to shake hands all round with the men of the Trinity Hall boat when they gained the headship of the river is but a trivial instance of eccentric enthusiasm. Perhaps more on all fours with Dr. Blizzard's exploit was the long, lean, wiry Trinity Hall don's match against Camden of Peterhouse at Fenner's, when the former undertook to walk two miles while the latter ran three, and parted with his clothing so recklessly that ladies present were in alarm, lest at the last stage he should divest himself of the only article of attire left and reach the winning post in *puris naturalibus*. Who that saw Leslie Stephen in his later days would have dreamed that the grave, decorous man of letters could ever have had such sublime disregard for appearances! But his Alpine feats proved that he was a daring and adventurous soul who would stick at nothing when his blood was up, and there was "a crowded hour of glorious life" in prospect.

Among the memorable incidents of my time was the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales (the late King Edward and Queen Alexandra) soon after their marriage. Their reception was one of the wildest enthusiasm. The whole 'Varsity lost its head and ran amok into dissipation. There were no "gates" and no lectures—we were free to stay out all night and indulge in any orgies we pleased during the five days of the Royal visit. There were balls and fêtes and "divarsions galore!" Men who were seldom, if ever, known to keep morning chapel were seen there in dozens—clad in the evening dress which they had not thought it worth while to change after leaving the ball-room—a contrast to the usual attire of the morning chapeller who leapt from his bed as the bell

began to ring—flicked his face with a wet sponge, flung a pea jacket on over his night shirt, wound a woollen wrap round his throat, thrust his legs into his boating "bags" and in that *deshabille* rushed into the chapel just before the gates closed. We had, during that exciting time to wear full academic costume, black coats, white ties and bands all day long; and I suppose the dons, satisfied with inflicting upon us those insignia of decorum, shut their eyes to the peculiar ways in which we testified our loyalty to our future sovereign and his spouse.

Other memorable incidents were the interchange of courtesies between the Oxford and Cambridge Volunteers and Athletic Clubs. The overwhelming hospitality shown to the visitors at each of the 'Varsities was productive of disastrous results. Railway traffic was entirely disorganised for hours, owing to the mad freaks of inebriated undergraduates, and the damage to the rolling stock was frightful. I remember well the scene along the road to the station when the Oxford Volunteers were leaving Cambridge. Rifles, bayonets, belts, cartouche-boxes, shakos strewed the ground as if a panic-stricken army had fled that way with fierce pursuers at its heels. Lines of linked riflemen from both 'Varsities lurched erratically along, filling the air with deafening drinking choruses. The railway officials were driven frantic, with Pandemonium let loose at the station.

There were similar scenes at Oxford and I think there was an even worse saturnalia after the respective visits of the inter-varsity teams of athletes. It was a wise measure to relegate these exuberant exhibitions of sporting rivalry to the neutral ground of London.

But though there were occasional outbursts of rowdyism, there was no deliberate "ragging" in my day. That odious form of ebullient blackguardism—the last expression of "bounder's" hooliganism—we were happily spared. I have seen men's rooms wrecked after a "drunk," but then no one was responsible for his

actions and the owner of the rooms as often as not took a joyous part in the game of demolition. But organised, malignant "ragging" is a very different thing—and I confess to a fond hope that some day the victim of a "rag" will turn savagely and kill one or two of his brutal assailants. The inevitable verdict of "justifiable homicide" might perhaps, have as deterrent an effect upon "raggers" as flogging had upon garrotters.

I recall one scene of wreck and ruin with humorous horror. It was the sequel to the most romantic escapade that came within my experience at the 'Varsity. Some twelve or fifteen miles from Cambridge there was a large ladies' school. The sixteen year old cousin of a Johnian freshman had been sent to this school. She was a romantic, high-spirited girl and she resented the drastic discipline of the head mistress. Her step-mother had always been harsh and cruel to her and she believed that it was at her step-mother's instigation that she was subjected to such rigid restrictions at the school. She appealed to her cousin, the Johnian, with whom she had always been on terms of comradeship, to help her to escape from this horrid prison-house. He was as harem-scarem a madcap as the girl and readily consented to rescue the distressed damsel. Taking his pal "Wild Charley" into his confidence he planned a scheme of deliverance. A rope-ladder was provided and at seven o'clock on a dark November night, a dogcart drew up in the lane at the back of the school garden. The girl had contrived to slip out of the house unseen. The rope-ladder was flung over, she scrambled over the wall and in an incredibly short space of time was seated beside her cousin, as the dogcart bowled merrily along to Cambridge. I believe that plans had been made for the proper and decent housing of the girl in Cambridge, but I forget what they were. What happened, however, was this. On arriving at Cambridge, the girl was disguised in boy's clothes and, donning cap and gown, boldly accompanied her rescuer to College. A supper

had been ordered from the kitchens in her cousin's rooms and three or four men who were in the secret were invited to join the party. The girl took her seat at the table on the right of her host, the oak was sported, and they were all enjoying themselves recklessly, when the door opened and the Senior Dean, a grim and saturnine person, entered the room. Without a word he walked straight up to the girl.

"Will you be good enough to get up and take my arm," he said.

She was too frightened to utter a syllable of protest, but just got up, took the Dean's proffered arm, and left the room. It turned out that the bedmaker had split upon her and handed her own key to the Dean to enable him to steal upon the culprits silently. I forget how the Dean disposed of his charge, but the upshot was that she was sent home and her cousin and "Wild Charley" were "sent down" for a couple of terms. The night before they went down there was a farewell "drunk" at the cousin's rooms. I looked in the next morning and I don't think there was any article of furniture, useful or ornamental, that was not smashed into smithereens. The row, I was told, had been awful, but no one had interfered with them. The cousin never returned to the 'Varsity, but "Wild Charley" did, and was the hero of some sensational adventures which resulted in his being sent down on two subsequent occasions. He was a very intimate friend of mine till the day of his death. Sometimes, even in his later manhood, there were flashes of that mad, reckless, daring spirit that gained him his 'Varsity sobriquet.

The freaks and frolics of undergraduate life,

> "How *he* had climbed across the spikes
> And *he* had squeezed himself betwixt the bars
> And *he* had breath'd the Proctor's dogs—"

though amusing enough to recall when one is yarning with an old crony who has participated in them, would

present but a sorry appearance if set down in cold print. The stamp of egregious folly is on most of them, and the fun that redeemed the folly would probably appeal to very few but the actors in them. Therefore, I will not be guilty of the *bêtise* of attempting to picture them.

The stage was taboo in my time in Cambridge—the town theatre was rigidly closed in term time and the occasional performances of the famous A. D. C. (Amateur Dramatic Club) founded by Sir Francis Burnand, were all the dramatic fare we were allowed. But the acting of the members of the A. D. C. was admirable. There were two men, Cyril Flower (the late Lord Battersea) and de Michélè, both of Trinity, who "made up" into two as bewitching women as I ever saw on the boards. Flower's beauty was of the queenly, aristocratic order, de Michélè's of the saucy, soubrette genre. Each in his way was charming, and I have known strangers fall in love with both of them, throw costly bouquets to them and refuse to believe that they were not genuine femininities.

'Varsity life had its pleasures and its pains. I do not care to analyse either. But as for learning anything there likely to be of the slightest use in after life, "I hae ma doots." Perhaps it was one's own fault if one did not pick up some crumbs of knowledge, and I suppose that indirectly and incidentally one did add to one's store of information and gain some expansion of ideas. But for my own part I must candidly confess that my education did not begin until after I had quitted Alma Mater, and it has been going on ever since.

III

Some Piquant Press Experiences.

Journalism was but a hap-hazard profession when I first joined its ranks. Indeed it was hardly regarded as a serious profession at all ; I mean for public school and 'Varsity men. It was looked upon as a makeshift way of earning one's bread until one's legitimate profession provided the means of livelihood. " A fellow who wrote for the newspapers " was considered *dèclassè*. But there was a smack of Bohemianism about Press-work which rendered it attractive, especially to the impecunious barrister, and, if one had the knack of writing, it was infinitely pleasanter and more immediately remunerative than the dull drudgery and patient waiting for briefs which even the most moderate success at the Bar entailed. It was thus that I, like scores of others similarly situated, drifted into journalism, without any special training for the craft. The real, practical work of the Press was in the hands of the sub-editors and reporters: most of the former had risen from the composing room and had every mechanical detail of the art of turning out a newspaper at their fingers-ends. A very capable race they were, and good fellows too, many of them, though generally diamonds in the rough, whose " manners had not that repose which marks the caste of Vere de Vere."

My own earliest experiences of journalism had an almost opera-bouffe flavour about them, which has made them linger more vividly in my memory than they would probably have done otherwise.

The first journal on which I was engaged was " The Cosmopolitan," a " high-class " sixpenny weekly, which

had come into the hands of a Syndicate, two influential members of which were friends of mine. The Chief Editor and Managing Director, who had originally started the paper, was Colonel Hiram B. Fuller, a clever and plausible American adventurer, a handsome man with a fine presence, rendered more imposing by gold-rimmed pince-nez and a liberal display of cambric shirt-front. For financial reasons, often urgent, the Colonel generally resided in Paris, where he lived well on the proceeds of his puffs of Parisian tradesmen. I, as assistant-Editor, with a capable but bibulous sub., of the type I have already described, was responsible for bringing out the paper in London. I never saw the colour of the Colonel's money, and my only source of revenue was from the sale of the books which were sent for review. The sub-editor, following his Chief's example, worked the puff system for his own benefit in London. We frequently had difficulties with the printer, and I had often to assist in raising the necessary funds for bringing the paper out, by the hypothecation of various articles of portable property. But then, on the other hand, I had the delight of seeing my own articles in print every week, and of writing practically what I pleased, *plus* the satisfaction of gaining a thorough insight into practical newspaper work in every phase.

Then there were the contributors, with some of whom I was on intimate terms, notably "Ouida," whose fame was in its first blaze. She was then about eight-and-twenty, with a certain *beautè du diable* which she did not long retain. She had large, dark expressive eyes, and a vivacious manner—often indeed dashing and audacious—which was undeniably attractive. When she was in an animated mood, as she generally was in those days, hers was a fascinating personality. We had a serious difference once over a great banquet of hippophagists at the Langham Hotel, where "Ouida" then lived with her mother, Madame de la Ramée. In common with other representatives of the Press I was invited to

the banquet. The two hundred guests included several notable persons, among them Sir John Lubbock and Sir Henry Thompson. Horse-flesh, of course, supplied the *pièces de resistance* and the *hors d'œuvres*, and the idea was to test its merits as a proposed article of common food. Personally I found it excellent fare, quite equal to beef. I had no sentimental objection to eating the flesh of the horse, and to this day I cannot understand the sentiment which revolts from eating horse, and yet has no scruple in devouring *lamb*. But "Ouida" was furious. She lashed herself into foaming indignation over the horrible and brutal callousness of those who could deliberately sit down to gorge themselves on the cooked flesh of the most noble and beautiful of animals and man's faithfullest friend to boot. She declared that hippophagy was every whit as revolting and barbarous as cannibalism, and she wrote a signed article in the "Cosmopolitan" giving expression to these views in the most vigorous and trenchant language. In the same issue appeared my special report of the banquet and my frank admission that I had found horse-flesh, served up, as it was at the Langham, with admirable culinary skill, very palatable fare. "Ouida's" wrath fell upon me; she vowed that she would never speak to any man who had degraded himself by eating horse. So indignant was she with the manager of the Langham for allowing such "horrible and disgusting orgies" to take place under his roof, that, as a practical protest against such barbarism, she said she should give up her rooms at the Hotel. As a matter of fact, she did so far carry her threat into execution as to vacate her suite of apartments for a couple of months, but, having given the place time to get purged and sweet again, she resumed her residence there.

With me also she deigned to be reconciled, on my assuring her that I had only attended the banquet in discharge of my duty as a pressman, and that I had no active sympathy with the hippophagists. I have never

to my knowledge eaten horse-flesh since, though after the revelations made as to the composition of German sausages, one never knows what one may have *unwittingly* partaken of. The attempt made to popularize horse-flesh as a common article of food failed both in London and Paris. But, possibly, when the motor has completely driven the horse out of the field as a locomotive agent, hippophagy may again come to the front, and solve the problem " What are we to do with our horses ? "

I last met " Ouida " at the Lyceum on the first night of Henry Irving's " Macbeth." She saw me in the stalls, and sent for me to her private box. Hamilton Aidé, who had made something of a name by his plays " A Nine Day's Wonder " and " Philip," the latter produced by Colonel Bateman with Irving in the title rôle, was with her, and another man whose name I forget. She had altered considerably—her face had grown much thinner and she looked to me neurotic, but the fine dark eyes retained their lustre, and there was the old sympathetic charm in her voice and manner.

Another notable contributor to the " Cosmopolitan " was Dr. Charles Mackay, a brilliant journalist and a poet of no mean achievement. It was not long after his return from America, where he had acted as Special Correspondent for the " Times " with the Federal forces during the Civil War, that I became acquainted with him. He had made himself extremely popular with the " Northerners," and a public banquet was given him at Delmonico's on the eve of his departure for England. When he rose to acknowledge the toast in his honour, he said he was no orator, and in a land of orators, he felt that it would be impossible to do justice to his feelings in the halting phrases of which alone he was capable, but he had composed some verses which he begged that they would allow him to recite in lieu of a speech. Stirring and impressive lines they were, too. They were first printed in " The Cosmopolitan," and I do not think

that they are included in his published works. I shall, therefore, make no apology for quoting some of them here, for they have particular significance just now in view of the great wave of fraternal sympathy and amity which is sweeping over both nations.

Said brother Jonathan to John—
" You are the elder born,
And I can bear another's hate,
But not your lightest scorn.
You've lived a life of noble strife,
You've made a world your own,
Why, when I follow in your steps,
Receive me with a groan ?

* * * * * * *

" I feel the promptings of my youth
That urge me evermore
To spread my name, my race, my fame
From shore to furthest shore.
I feel the lightning's in my blood,
The thunder's in my hand,
And I must work my destiny,
Whoever may withstand.

* * * * * * *

" And if you'd give me, brother John,
The sympathy I crave,
And stretch your warm fraternal hand,
Across the Atlantic wave,
I'd give it such a cordial grasp,
That earth should start to see,
And ancient crowns and sceptres shake
That fear both you and me."

* * * * * * *

Said brother John to Jonathan—
" You do my nature wrong ;
I never hated, never scorned,
But loved you well and long :
If, children of the self-same sire,
We've quarrelled now and then,
'Twas only in our early youth,
And not since we were men.

* * * * * * *

"And if, with cautious, cooler blood,
Result of sufferings keen,
I sometimes think you move too fast,
Mistake not what I mean.
I've felt the follies of my youth,
The errors of my prime,
And dreamed for you, my father's son,
A future more sublime.

* * * * * * *

"And here's my hand—'tis freely given—
I stretch it o'er the brine,
And wish you from my heart of hearts
A higher life than mine.
Together let us rule the world,
Together let us thrive.

* * * * * * *

Take you the West and I the East,
We'll spread ourselves abroad,
With trade and spade and wholesome law
And faith in man and God.

* * * * * * *

"Take you the West and I the East,
We speak the self-same tongue
That Milton wrote and Chatham spoke
That Burns and Shakespeare sung;
And from our tongue, our hand, our heart
Shall countless blessings flow
To light two darkened hemispheres
That know not where they go.

* * * * * * *

"Our Anglo-Saxon name and fame,
Our Anglo-Saxon speech,
Receive their mission straight from Heaven
To civilize and teach.
So here's my hand, I stretch it forth,
Ye meaner lands look on!
From this day forth there's friendship firm
'Twixt Jonathan and John."

* * * * * * *

I know from experience the effect which these lines, delivered with spirit and expression, can produce on a sympathetic English audience, and I can therefore form some idea of the enthusiasm which they created under

the remarkable circumstances in which they were first recited, hot from the poet's brain and pen.

I suppose there have never been two more popular songs than Charles Mackay's "Cheer, Boys, Cheer," and "There's a good time coming." Henry Russell, the once famous tenor, father of William Clarke Russell the nautical novelist, set them to music and sang them with great effect. Nearly half a million copies of each were sold—yet the author, so he told me, never received a single sou of the proceeds.

My recollection of Charles Mackay is that of a short, rather stout man, with long, straight hair, neither fair nor dark, and a plain but pleasant and intelligent face. To me, a budding journalist, he was very kind and I have grateful memories of his encouraging and sympathetic letters. He was subsequently editor of "The London Scotsman," a short-lived journal to which I contributed, and "The London Review" which had an equally brief career. I remember that he sometimes brought to the "Cosmopolitan" office two children, a boy and girl, both subsequently distinguished—the one his son, Eric Mackay—who inherited his father's poetic gifts—the other his step-daughter, now known to the world as Marie Corelli.

But the most remarkable and eccentric of all the contributors to the "Cosmopolitan" was the notorious George Francis Train. That enterprising but reckless American is, I suppose, quite forgotten now, but he made a considerable stir in the world in his day. He first came over to England, I think, in 1860, full of a great scheme to introduce into this country the system of iron tramways for omnibuses drawn by horses, which he had inaugurated in New York. The line which he laid down at Birkenhead is still in existence, though in a considerably modified form. But he came to grief over his London tramways, one of which was from Westminster to Kennington. The shape of the rails, with their projecting flanges, rendered them dangerous

to ordinary traffic, and, as they had been laid down without special parliamentary authority, the vestries decided to abolish them as a nuisance. George Francis Train fought the vestries fiercely, but without success. He made his name, however, familiar as a household word both in England and America during the sixties.

But it was quite apart from tramways that George Francis Train attained the notoriety of which his old friend the Editor-in-Chief of the "Cosmopolitan" astutely availed himself. On the 18th of January 1868, whilst the Fenian scare was at its height and the police everywhere over the kingdom in town and country were going their patrol rounds in pairs, armed to the teeth, George Francis Train landed at Cork and proceeded to Dublin, where he was promptly arrested as a suspected Fenian. He stoutly declared his innocence and repudiated all connexion with the Fenians. But his protestations were unheeded. He vowed that he would make both hemispheres ring with the story of his wrongs. Colonel Fuller immediately offered him the columns of the "Cosmopolitan" in which to air his grievances. This, however, was more than the authorities would allow whilst he was in custody. He might write as much as he pleased, but he must confine himself to topics unconnected with his arrest. Of this concession he availed himself to the utmost. Every week he mailed from Mountjoy prison five or six columns of "copy" on "things in general." My instructions were to insert all that he sent in. "No matter what rubbish he writes," wrote the Colonel from Paris, "in with every word of it. His name is prominently before the public just now and they'll read anything he chooses to write." And the Colonel was right—the circulation of the "Cosmopolitan" undoubtedly increased considerably whilst George Francis continued his erratic and discursive contributions.

He was not long, however, detained in prison. His innocence of any active sympathy with Fenianism was

satisfactorily proved and he was somewhat contemptuously liberated.

But the world had not by any means heard the last of George Francis Train's arrest and imprisonment. As soon as he came out of gaol he announced his intention of claiming £10,000 damages from the British Government. The "Cosmopolitan" of course backed him in his claim and maintained that he had been the victim of a gross and unpardonable outrage. George Francis himself made appeal after appeal to the President of the United States to take the matter up and demand in the name of right and justice redress for such an insult to an American citizen. But President Johnson was too much occupied with his own impeachment and impending trial, and his successor had too much on his hands in formulating the Alabama claims to have time or inclination to devote to Mr. Train and his grievances. I forget now whether he ever got any compensation—I am inclined to think that he did.

I saw a good deal of him at this time. There was certainly an abnormal amount of gas in his composition—he used to speak of himself as "The Blue-eyed Man of Destiny," and had a firm belief that there was a splendid future before him. He would be run for the Presidency, as sure as death, he told me—and, as sure as death, he would be elected. *Then* the world should see what a real man of genius could do as "President of the greatest Republic this planet has ever seen." He gave me the warmest invitation to be his guest at the White House, Washington City, and enjoy the presidential hospitality for as long as I pleased. But the gods willed otherwise and neither he nor I ever saw the inside of the White House under the conditions his fancy painted. He was a man of striking appearance, and, despite his gaseous qualities, talked with an eloquence which fascinated and impressed me. At a great oration which he delivered in London, with a peer of historic title in the chair, "The Blue-eyed Man of

Destiny " brought down the house by giving as his peroration the concluding stanzas from the verses by Charles Mackay, which I have just quoted, emphasising them by drawing the glove from his right hand (he always wore gloves and immaculate dress on the platform) and extending his ungloved palm to the noble chairman—who cordially grasped it—and thus they stood handfasted in an attitude symbolic of the brotherhood of John and Jonathan, amid the ringing cheers of the audience.

A very prominent member of the " Cosmopolitan " staff was " The Countess "—a half French, half American lady, who had married a Belgian Count. She lived mostly in Paris with her two daughters, but paid frequent visits to London. She " worked the oracle " among the Parisian modistes and her weekly article, " Gossip from the Boulevards," was a very lively and entertaining *chronique scandaleuse*. Her visits to London usually coincided with the arrival of wealthy young Americans who made Morley's Hotel their head quarters. Both the Colonel and Countess were *personae gratae* to the *jeuneusse d'orèe* of New York, and if these gilded youths paid pretty heavily for the honour of entertaining the two " Cosmopolitans " I suppose they considered that they had a *quid pro quo* in their introduction to London and Paris under such accomplished ciceroni.

At that time there was a lot of wild talk among young Americans of this class about forcing a war with England. I remember meeting three of these one day in the editorial room (our offices were then in Northumberland Street next door to those of the " Pall Mall Gazette," to which the Colonel invariably referred as " our yellow-faced neighbour ") whither they had come to pay court to the Countess and her daughters. They talked in an offensively belligerent tone, calculated to stir the blood of the most sluggish of Britishers ; each of them said he was ready to plank down 100,000 dollars towards the

expenses of a war with England and declared that they knew a thousand more young bloods of New York, who were ready to come down with the dust to a similar tune. This was more than I could stand—I retorted that their dollars were about all that would ever be seen of them, that they hadn't grit enough to do a day's fighting and that if every man, woman and child in the States put down 100,000 dollars, the amount wouldn't see them through a war with England, or go half-way towards paying the indemnity we should exact from them. Then the fat was in the fire with a vengeance. In an instant we were all on our feet, glaring defiance, and in another moment there would have been " wigs on the green " if the Countess had not interposed. She insisted that I had been insulted and that an apology was due to me. They declined to apologise ; upon which the Countess, who was a very fine and stately woman, rose with great dignity and said, in her coldest and severest tones to her daughters :

" Come, my dears, I cannot condescend to stay another moment in the presence of persons who do not know how to conduct themselves as gentlemen," then turning to me, she added : " I shall be glad of your escort, and I am sorry that I should ever have to say that I am ashamed of Americans, in the presence of an Englishman."

This was too much for the New York fire-eaters; they caved in and apologised.

" And now," said the Countess to the ringleader. " I think, Mr. Vansittart, the best thing you can do is to run over to Morley's and order them to send in mint-juleps for the company."

Those cool and delightful drinks quenched our fiery tempers and that night I dined with the bellicose trio at Morley's in company with the Countess and the Colonel, and found that they were not such bad fellows after all, when they had let the gas out of their bags.

The Countess's *bête noire* was an American of some

notoriety, the Chevalier Wikoff, who was an occasional contributor to the " Cosmopolitan "—a tall, thin, dour, disagreeable looking man. He had been one of Palmerston's " spies " in Italy, but, owing to the part he played in the escape of a nun from a convent, he made the country too hot to hold him. The scandal was a nine days' wonder and the Chevalier wrote a book to vindicate his action, which caused some little excitement both here and in Italy. For some reason, which I never discovered, the Countess had her knife into the Chevalier, and created a coolness between him and his old friend Colonel Fuller. Matters culminated in a libellous reference to Wikoff in " Gossip from the Boulevards." The Countess dragged him into her article and asked contemptuously " Chevalier ! Chevalier of what order I should like to know ? *Chevalier d'industrie* most likely." This imputation on his character was more than the Chevalier could stand and he determined to appeal to the law for redress. It so happened that at this moment there was a temporary rupture between myself and Colonel Fuller and my connection with the " Cosmopolitan " was suspended. The Chevalier, knowing me to be a Templar, applied to me for advice and I advised him to go to Messrs. Lewis and Lewis, of Ely Place, Hatton Garden. It was arranged that I should go with him, but before our visit there was a fresh complication.

The Chevalier had expressed himself pretty strongly as to the conduct and character of the Countess —and his remarks had been repeated to that lady. Whereupon the Colonel promptly sent a challenge to Wikoff.

The bearer of the cartel was Mr. Thomas Tully, afterwards Colonel of the London Irish, who will be remembered for his long connexion with the Military Tournaments as Secretary and Organizer. He was a well-built, dapper, clear-eyed, soldierly, little man—known among his intimates, of whom I was one, as

" Bayard "—as honourable, straight-forward and chivalrous a comrade as I have ever known. Wikoff was in bed at the Langham Hotel when Tully arrived. He protested that he could see no visitors, but " Bayard " insisted on seeing him and demanding on behalf of the Colonel the satisfaction due from one gentleman to another. In telling the story, my friend assured me that the Chevalier's face, when he was called upon to name a second with whom he (Tully) could consult as to choice of ground and weapons, went perfectly green with funk and he stammered out something about " Absurd ! duelling is obsolete, not allowed in England—police would interfere."

" Chevalier Wikoff," said Tully sternly, " you have grossly insulted a lady and you cannot be allowed to slink out of the consequences. You know very well that a hostile meeting can be easily arranged in France, and as the Colonel returns to Paris on Saturday, I shall expect your second, whose name you will be good enough to send me before to-morrow morning, to fix the time and place for Sunday next."

" And with that Tully left him.

When I saw the Chevalier he affected to treat the matter with ridicule.

" That egregious ass Fuller," he said, " has actually had the impudence to send me a challenge. I've half a mind to summon him for a breach of the peace. What do you think ? "

" I should let the matter rest, Chevalier, until the Colonel takes some further step. But you can mention it to Lewis if you like. He may look upon it as an aggravation of the libel and advise you to take advantage of it."

I have reason to remember that visit to Messrs. Lewis and Lewis for reasons quite unconnected with Chevalier Wikoff. Whilst the Chevalier was engaged with Lewis *père*—the son, Mr. George Lewis (now Sir George) then a handsome and agreeable man of five and thirty—took

compassion on me, and, on learning that I was a student at the Bar, said :

" Then I think I can show you something that will interest you."

And he proceeded to show me the photographed copies of the reports of evidence taken in Brussels at the trial of Risk Allah Bey.

" These," he added, " are the first photographic copies of legal ' exhibits ' ever used with the sanction of the Courts in England."

What made them the more interesting was the fact that Messrs. Lewis and Lewis were solicitors for the *Daily Telegraph* in the sensational libel case brought against that journal by the aforesaid Risk Allah Bey.

This gentleman was a Syrian adventurer, a breeder of silkworms at Beyrout, who came over to England, married a rich widow, got into society, induced his wife to make a will in his favour and was left a widower two months later. There were, however, suspicious circumstances attending the lady's demise which were considered sufficient to justify a legal inquiry into the cause of death. But nothing definitely incriminating could be brought home to Risk Allah, and his innocence, if not proven, was at least accepted as a logical issue of the trial.

There was a step-son to whom £15,000 was bequeathed by his mother, with the proviso that if he died before attaining the age of twenty-one, half of the bequest should pass to Risk Allah. The prudent step-father also insured his step-son's life for £1,000. Then the obliging boy, at an hotel in Brussels, blew his brains out. At least that was Risk Allah Bey's version of the tragedy. But as he was staying at the same hotel as his step-son, with a room adjoining and opening into that occupied by the boy, and as he undoubtedly benefitted materially by the latter's death, suspicions of foul play were aroused, with the result that Risk Allah Bey found himself in the dock charged with murder and forgery. The evidence,

however, was not quite sufficient to prove his guilt; after a long and sensational trial he was acquitted and the Press generally acquiesced in the theory of suicide. But there were exceptions, especially among the English Press and notably one—the special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, Felix Whitehurst, who for many years was the brilliant and famous representative of that journal in Paris, plainly intimated his belief that there had been a miscarriage of justice and that Risk Allah Bey had murdered his ward. In a leading article, the *Daily Telegraph* identified itself editorially with the views of its correspondent and Risk Allah Bey issued a writ for libel. The case was tried before Lord Chief Justice Cockburn. Serjeant Parry was leading counsel for the plaintiff. Serjeant Ballantine, Coleridge, Q.C. (afterwards Lord Chief Justice), Henry James, Q.C. (now Lord James of Hereford), and Montagu Williams were for the defence. Monty Williams and George Lewis had been together to Brussels to collect every possible scrap of evidence against the plaintiff. There was intense excitement in Court when Serjeant Ballantine, the subtlest cross-examiner of his day, rose to cross-examine Risk Allah. But that wily Oriental was more than a match even for Ballantine. He came out of the long and searching ordeal triumphantly and the jury gave him a verdict for £960 damages. Several other English newspapers on which writs had been served, taking the case as a test, decided to pay up without going into Court, and Risk Allah Bey, if he did not altogether clear his character, cleared, at any rate, several thousands of pounds.

I have never spoken to Sir George Lewis since, but I have not forgotten the courtesy and kindness he showed then to an unknown young Templar and journalist.

The Chevalier, I remember, was not so well pleased with the visit as I was. He had a fixed idea that no solicitor had a right to charge more than the traditional six-and-eightpence for legal advice. He tendered that

sum to the elder Mr. Lewis, but was informed that the lowest fee in that office was a guinea. The Chevalier blustered, protested, made himseif very offensive, but had to part with the guinea. He was in a very bad temper afterwards and did not confide to me the nature of Mr. Lewis's advice. As he took no further legal proceedings, however, against the Countess and the Colonel, I concluded that the solicitor had thrown cold water on his scheme of vengeance. As to the duel, he backed out of that with ignominious pusillanimity.

The Chevalier Wikoff was, I think, the meanest and most inhospitable man I ever met. In this connection "Ouida" once took what she herself called "a glorious rise" out of him. I have said that he lived at the Langham. One broiling Sunday in July I went from the Temple to keep an appointment with him for the discussion of those legal matters I have mentioned. We had a conference of more than two hours, and when it was over, about lunch time, he did not offer me even so much as an iced drink by way of refreshment—though he was imbibing a julep when I entered his room. As he emerged with me into the corridor we came face to face with "Ouida." She greeted me in her usual effusive manner, then added, with a malicious acidity which made Wikoff squirm:

"Of course, the Chevalier, with his usual well-known hospitality, has already entertained you at lunch. I am so sorry because otherwise I should have been delighted if you would have lunched with my mother and me."

A more abject fool than the Chevalier looked at that moment I have never seen. And I deliberately made matters worse for him by saying:

"Oh! no, I have not had lunch yet and I shall be very happy to be your guest."

I was disgusted with the Chevalier's meanness and was determined not to lose the chance of a merry meal with "Ouida." And didn't she just let out against the Chevalier when we were alone!

I had some queer visitors at the "Cosmopolitan" office. A notable one was Mademoiselle Vestvali "the great Californian actress." She drove up one morning in her brougham and produced a heap of letters of introduction from American journalists to Colonel Fuller. The Colonel was in Paris, but I did my devoirs in his absence and accepted an invitation to lunch with Mademoiselle Vestvali the next day. When I arrived at the Golden Cross, where she was staying, I found a dense crowd in front of the hotel. On inquiry I learned that Mademoiselle had just returned from her morning ride in the Park, and, as she rode man-fashion, in a picturesque but utterly unconventional costume, the crowd was easily accounted for. She was sitting on a table, swinging her spurred and booted foot against the legs and smoking a cigarette when I entered the room.

"Guess your folks think me a bit strange," she said, "jedging by the way they stare and follow me."

"Our women have not yet progressed beyond the side-saddle in this effete country, Mademoiselle. Your advanced and manly theories come as something of a surprise to us."

"Well, what's wrong with a woman's riding man-fashion? I've done it since I was old enough to sit a horse at all. It is far safer and more comfortable than the ridiculous way your women hang on lop-sided to one flank of a horse. What guys they look! I guess no woman that had any respect for her appearance would ride that fashion out California way."

She looked so picturesque and handsome, with her dark eyes flashing from under her broad-brimmed sombrero and her tight-fitting jacket showing off her superb figure to full advantage, that I had no mind to be critical as to the propriety or impropriety of her riding-dress.

Mrs. Grundy or no Mrs. Grundy, Vestvali made an undeniably striking and fascinating picture. But her bold display of horsemanship entailed her abrupt

departure from the hotel and I don't think she repeated the experiment. She realised that London was not ripe for it.

She had come over here to play Romeo, in which part she had, according to the press cuttings she produced, scored an enormous success in the States and on the Continent. She had engaged the Lyceum Theatre and a competent company to support her—pretty and graceful Millie Palmer was the Juliet, Walter Lacy, greatest of Mercutios, played his favourite part, and Jack Ryder was the Friar Lawrence—a rôle in which, despite his raven-like voice, he was then thought to be unequalled. The theatre was crowded the first night and for a good many nights by people curious to see Romeo played by a woman and curious also to see a woman who so outrageously defied conventionality off the stage. Her Romeo was not a great performance—her passion was altogether too coarse and boisterous for the part, and she ranted to an extent that often made her unintelligible. But there was no denying her fire, and she produced one sensational effect which, on a particular evening at any rate, thrilled the house as I have seldom seen a house thrilled before or since. In her furious attack on Paris she pinked that unfortunate youth clean through the arm—the shriek of pain from the actress who was playing the part was the most natural and agonising I ever heard—and the way in which the victim fell back swooning was hailed with acclaim as a fine piece of acting till the curtain came down hurriedly and it was whispered that a serious accident had happened. The wounded lady was taken to the hospital and it was not easy to get another Paris to face this too passionate Romeo. Vestvali's vogue was very short—there was nothing in her acting to warrant the expectation that she could draw the London public. Indeed, though I did not like to tell her so, I always thought that her true sphere was the Circus, where she might have witched the world with noble horsemanship.

At a time when the memory of President Lincoln's assassination was still fresh, and the name of his assassin, the actor, John Wilkes Booth, was yet green in infamy, I received from New York a printed announcement, with covering letter, to the effect that the "famous American Actor," John Edward Booth, and his equally "celebrated" wife, Hester Booth, were on their way to London to open a theatrical season there. Soon after the letter the "celebrated actor and actress" arrived and called at my office. I don't think I was ever more surprised in my life than at the appearance presented by this remarkable pair. Had I been asked to suggest their profession I should have said that they were a brace of fanatical revivalists—the last calling I should have credited them with would have been the stage. They were the most solemn couple I ever set eyes on. Mrs. Booth was a severe-visaged, sallow-complexioned woman of about two or three and thirty, with the most remarkable pair of eyes (except perhaps those of Tennie C. Claflin, now Lady Cook) I ever saw. They were large and lustrous—of what colour I could not tell, for they seemed to be perpetually changing their colour—from a light bluish grey to a deep violet. There was a look of unfathomable depth in them and an earnestness that had quite an unpleasant and disturbing effect. She had a low, soft voice with a singular penetrating clearness. Her husband was in his way equally remarkable. His figure was tall and gaunt, his face long, thin, cadaverous, with high cheekbones and deep-sunken grey eyes.

Mrs. Booth did most of the speaking. She told me that they had already engaged the Marylebone Theatre and that they had a "mission." They proposed to use the stage to work a reformation in the habits of the lower classes—and at the same time appeal to the upper classes to help them in that object. This didn't sound very promising from a dramatic point of view, but I professed to be deeply interested and said that if I could

see my way to further their "mission" I would do so.

The first piece they put up at the Marylebone Theatre was a lugubrious melodrama entitled "Father come Home" with, of course, a strong temperance moral. As the two were billed as "Mr. and Mrs. Booth, the celebrated American actor and actress," many people were attracted by the name—some possibly thought that it was the great American tragedian, Edwin Booth, the brother of the assassin to whom J. E. Booth *said* he was closely related. Strange to say, I found their acting really remarkable. There was a force and earnestness in it which made one at times forget the mawkish and maudlin twaddle of the dialogue and the hackneyed pathos of the situations.

They did not, however, make a hit, at least in that form of drama—but they did, oddly enough, in Douglas Jerrold's "Black-eyed Susan." Mrs. Booth, in explanation of this change of front, calmly told me that they had put that piece on because it was necessary to draw money. Their farewell benefit was in this drama, with the additional attraction of Adah Isaacs Menken in the part of the hero, William. Poetess, actress, adventuress—the friend of Alexandre Dumas, the elder, Algernon Charles Swinburne and Charles Dickens—with a career as romantic as that of any heroine in fiction—Adah Isaacs Menken had a strange fascination for everyone who was brought in contact with her. She was an enigma to Society. No one knew exactly where or how to class her. To Mrs. Grundy, of course, she was "that notorious person"—whom no respectable member of Society ought to recognise. But those who knew her best believed her to be a wayward, passionate woman, affectionate, emotional, generous, large-hearted, with singular power of fascination both physical and intellectual. She had had several husbands—one of them, John Carmel Heman, the famous pugilist who fought Tom Sayers and Tom King, I had known both in and out of the Ring—but, taking advantage of the elastic

divorce laws of the States, had succeeded in freeing herself from all of them. She was the last person with whom I should have expected Mrs. Booth to associate herself. But that lady knew how sound is the policy of making friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness and had no scruple in availing herself of the popularity of the beautiful and notorious Menken—whom she had known out in the Far West and to whom she appealed as one American woman to another.

To see the Booths act in this piece was a revelation to me. They threw themselves into their parts, on that last night, with a gusto which astounded me. After the play was over we had supper on the stage and I had the honour of sitting next to the lovely Menken and enjoying her vivacious conversation—very "fetching" she looked, too, in her sailor's costume (for she still retained the garb of the faithful William) which gave glimpses of that voluptuous figure which had drawn all London to see her in "Mazeppa." Her great dark eyes, sometimes sparkling with roguery, sometimes ablaze with Southern fire that told of the Spanish blood in her veins—her short, crisp, curly black hair, her merry laugh, make up a picture too pleasant ever to fade wholly from my memory.

This was a strange ending to the "mission" which the Booths had so solemnly announced to me. But they did not appear to see anything incongruous or inconsistent in their *volte-face*. They had a keen eye to the main chance and made no secret of it. If they were humbugs, they were not hypocrites. Afterwards, under a different name, they became, I believe, two of the most famous "debt raisers" in the States. Those who have read Harold Frederic's fine novel "Illumination," will not need to be told what the methods of the "debt raisers" were. They undertook to hold "missions," of a sensationally revivalistic character, to raise funds for removing any debt there might be on a Church or Chapel, receiving of course, a substantial commission

on the sum raised. In this vocation the theatrical experiences of the Booths must have stood them in good stead.

Among visitors that still stand out unforgotten was Pat McArdle—who had been surgeon on the Confederate privateer *Shenandoah*. Her career was nothing like as exciting as that of her consort the *Alabama*—indeed the only remarkable point about her exploits was that they were nearly all achieved after the war was over. Captain Waddely, her commander, being at sea, was quite ignorant of the fact that hostilities had ceased, and went on gaily capturing and destroying Federal merchantmen for three months or more after the final surrender of the Confederates. When he did learn that all was over he sailed to Liverpool and surrendered the *Shenandoah* to the British Government. Pat McArdle was one of the handsomest fellows and raciest raconteurs I have ever met. His moustache alone would keep him for ever green in my memory—it was, with one exception of which more anon, the most magnificent I have ever seen—a beautiful blonde in colour and of a superbly symmetrical shape. He was inordinately vain of it and he had reason to be. No woman, he declared, could withstand it. There was, on board one of the merchant ships captured by the *Shenandoah* a lovely girl, the niece or daughter, (I forget which) of the skipper. Pat fell in love with her and swore he would marry her. *She* swore she would never marry a "Reb." But the moustache subdued her, by the time the *Shenandoah* reached Liverpool the lady had practically capitulated. And one day Pat came to the "Cosmopolitan" office in a state of the wildest excitement. *She* was in London —he had seen her. She had promised to be his wife—all opposition was withdrawn—we must all come out and drink to the health of himself and his bride. This we did, and, as the cups flowed freely, I did not forget to toast the irresistible moustache—which Pat was fondly and proudly caressing

Before I dismiss my "Cosmopolitan" experiences there is one singular incident which is perhaps worth relating. At a quarter to four o'clock on the afternoon of Friday, December 13th, 1867, I was in the composing room at the printing office in Plough Court, Fetter Lane, seeing the last pages of the "Cosmopolitan" to press. Suddenly there came a loud report which shook the building—everyone looked up startled. "Fenians," said I jocosely, and there was a general laugh, for we were in the midst of the great Fenian scare and bogus surprises were common. But half an hour later I knew that my jocose remark had a terrible significance, for the noise which had startled us was caused by the great Clerkenwell explosion which wrought fearful havoc of life and property. There were two Fenians, Burke and Casey, confined in the Clerkenwell House of Detention and a plot was concocted among their fellow Fenians outside to liberate them. In furtherance of their scheme three men wheeled a thirty-six gallon cask full of gunpowder up to the walls of Clerkenwell prison and propped it up against the masonry—a fuse was attached—the conspirators bolted and left the powder to do its work. Had Burke and Casey been, as the plotters expected them to be, in the exercise yard, they would have met with instant death, for the bricks flew across the open space like a storm of grape-shot—but all the prisoners had just been marched out of the yard, and so escaped an appalling fate. The public, however, suffered. In one way or another some thirty or forty deaths were traceable to the explosion and probably double that number of persons were more or less severely injured. For this atrocious crime Michael Barrett was hanged. It was the last public execution in England; I saw it.

My connexion with the "Cosmopolitan" ended after two years, when I entered upon more lucrative, if less humorous, phases of journalism.

But there is one other piquant Press experience of that period to which I may refer. A little company of

us, eight, I think, in number, started a journal on the co-operative principle—each of us contributed so much weekly to the expenses of producing the paper and the profits were to be shared equally. With one exception (an official in the General Post Office) we were all either barristers *in esse* or *in posse*. Our chief was a clever member of the Chancery Bar, now a learned and eminent K.C., reputed to be *the* authority on Patent law. He was a delightful leader; kindly, wise and competent—wielder of a graceful and often sparkling pen. His good temper was inexhaustible and I think some of us must have tried it sorely. But I never knew him other than genial and tolerant. He was one of the hardest workers I ever met and seemed to revel in work. After a long day in Court or Chambers he would turn up smiling, at dinner or dance, and then, in the small hours, sit down to write a leader or a review of book or play, with as much freshness and zest as if he had just woke from a long and refreshing sleep. He was a capital journalist, smart, and racy, and—judicious. Our journal was called "The Theatrical and Musical Review" and its *mètier* was indicated by its motto "Still pleased to praise, yet not afraid to blame." It purported to be, and indeed honestly *was*, an independent journal—at a time when both musical and dramatic critics were for the most part a notoriously hireling crew. We had a fair amount of patronage from the public, but were comparatively little known until chance threw in our way a glorious opportunity of advertising ourselves and we made the most of it.

The notorious E. T. Smith, one of the most extraordinary men of his day, of whom I shall have some curious stories to tell presently, then proprietor of Cremorne Gardens, was also lessee of the Lyceum Theatre, and he had the effrontery to announce that for the principal boy's part in his forthcoming Christmas Pantomime he had engaged Miss Mabel Grey. Now this person was not an actress at all, but a notorious

courtezan—upon whose ill-fame E. T. Smith proposed to trade as a meretricious but alluring attraction to his show. "The Theatrical and Musical Review" took the matter up instantly and protested vigorously against this gross insult to the public and the profession. So hot was the stir we made about it, that other journals, notably *The Globe*, followed suit, generously giving us credit for our protest. E. T. Smith was furious and threatened us with an action for libel. Mabel Grey herself, not only menaced us with legal proceedings, but incited "The Boys," as the detestable well-dressed scum who haunted race-courses and night-houses were then called—to wreak personal vengeance upon us. We were told that our lives would not be safe from these ruffians unless we ceased our attacks upon the "Queen of the Demi-monde." We had, however, some formidable athletes on the staff, besides the freely tendered services of certain expert amateur boxers among our comrades of the Inns of Court, and so, undismayed by threats of violence, we awaited developments. But it was an exciting time—we never knew when or where we might be assaulted by cowardly roughs, and the burning question was: "Will E. T. Smith have the audacity to force Mabel Grey on the public?" Meanwhile we pegged away week after week, piling up the agony and calling the public to arms, till the storm we raised was so fierce that even E. T. Smith dared not face it and Mabel Grey's name was withdrawn from the bills.

The day after that announcement was made I was at Charing Cross Station when a very smart brougham drove up. A daintily-gloved hand from within found some difficulty in opening the door. I stepped forward, turned the handle and offered the lady my hand to alight. It was a very stylishly dressed person that emerged from the brougham. Her colourless face, framed in a mass of pale gold hair, was not pretty, but the wonderful grey eyes which flashed upon me as she thanked me were quite enough to account for the evil

celebrity she had won. For the woman was—*Mabel Grey!* Had she only known to whom she was indebted for the politeness, slight as it was, I shudder to think what her language would have been, for she had the reputation of being a past-mistress of "Billingsgate."

That was our one great "scoop." Fortune never favoured us with another such chance. The "Review," however, lived for nearly four years and paid its expenses —but our little co-operative scheme, though it afforded us plenty of amusement, never reached the dignity of a profit-sharing concern.

IV

Temple Memories

On a day in the early part of the August of 1910, soon after the Long Vacation had begun, I wandered from Fleet Street into the Temple. Some years had passed since I had last found myself among

> "Those bricky towers
> The which on Themmes' brode aged back doth ride,
> Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers."

"Studious" they may have been in Edmund Spenser's time and "studious" no doubt some of them are now—but *study* was hardly the prevailing feature of life in the Temple in my days, and my memories have not much to do with the dry-as-dust records of student lore. As I looked up at the old familiar windows of a score of chambers, my thoughts were of the Bohemian comrades who had made the hours of night, and sometimes those of day, speed merrily, if not always wisely, in those courts whose external soberness might suggest rules of life almost conventual in their rigidity.

It is a deceptive place, the Temple. Entering it that day from busy and noisy Fleet Street, I was struck more than ever by its quietude. It seemed "a home of ancient peace." Everything around told of the profound repose of Long Vacation. There was scarce a soul to be seen or heard. Pump Court, with its planes in full foliage, was as shady a solitude as the heart of the most retiring of recluses could wish for. In the sequestered coolness of Fountain Court, John Westlock might have whispered soft nothings to Ruth Pinch, without fear of interruption even from an impudent boy-clerk. No

footfall woke the echoes of Essex Court or Middle Temple Lane. I and the ghosts of the past had the silent spaces all to ourselves. And what a haunted place it is! I do not know of any other spot in London so suggestive of ghosts. Every Court, every set of chambers is peopled with them. If those dingy old walls could speak, what tales of tragedy and comedy they could tell! What strange histories of strangely-spent lives they could reveal! To me, who once knew it well, the Temple is full of human interest, wholly apart from its legal traditions.

But there have always been two sides to the Temple. Its very emblems—The Winged Horse of the Inner—The Lamb and Flag of the Middle—are susceptible of a double interpretation. A Templar set forth their symbolic meaning thus :—

"As by the Templar's haunts you go,
The Horse and Lamb displayed
In emblematic figures show
The merits of their trade.

Their clients may infer from thence
How just is their profession;
The Lamb sets forth their innocence,
The Horse their expedition."

But the lay interpreter had a very different tale to tell and conveyed his warning to the public thus :—

"'Tis all a trick, these all are shams
By which they mean to cheat you,
But have a care, for you're the lambs
And they the wolves that eat you.

Nor let the thoughts of no delay
Within these courts misguide you,
'Tis you're the showy horse, and they
The jockeys that will ride you."

I do not know whether the Temple is still in favour

as a residential quarter for bachelors who like freedom from the restraints of conventionality. It was so in my day, and I think its phases of Bohemianism bore as near a resemblance to the Quartier Latin as anything to be found in England. Mrs. Grundy was never held in respect by the Templars—they laughed at the prudish rules of conventionality. Something of the old Alsatian spirit still lingered in the purlieus of the Temple. Domestic propriety was not a strong point among members of the Bar, in my time. When famous advocates were raised to the Bench, it was often found that their wives were unfitted by character, position or education to be presented at Court or take any status in Society. Morals were traditionally lax among the Benchers and barristers of the Inns of Court and there was a sort of superstition that no man would ever attain distinction at the Bar if he were false to that tradition. Of course there were many virtuous exceptions and, no doubt, it is far otherwise now. I am referring to what was still a lingering tradition when I entered at the Temple. The old-time Bohemianism which scorned all intercourse with Society and was at sworn feud with every phase of conventionality was then still recognised as the freest, raciest, merriest mode of living that any man of spirit and independence and originality could adopt. The revolt against the hollow shams and fantastic trammels of Convention is natural to healthy and high-spirited youth and the only form in which it could find vent in my early days was such Bohemianism as the Temple fostered. Other times, other manners. I am quite ready to admit that the men of to-day may have better manners and may *be* the better for having those manners—than the men of my day with a very different code.

Most of us, I think, lived in a rather hugger-mugger style. Cleanliness and tidiness were not conspicuous features of the chambers of the bulk of the Templars of my time. There were a few virtuosi, no doubt, superior persons who went in for pianos and *bric-à-brac* and other

elegancies of culture. I numbered among my acquaintances an æsthetic poet whose chambers were "too awfully utter" in their artistic environment. But for the most part, chambers faithfully mirrored the loose habits of their occupants. Dust had a way of accumulating which would be deemed miraculous in any place but London. The lungs of most of us must have been filled with filmy particles, and heaven knows what microbes we took by myriads into our systems. But fortunately we knew nothing of bacteriology. Our careless philosophy of life accepted all that is implied in Othello's apothegm :

> "He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n,
> Let him not know it, and he's not robb'd at all."

But then the Temple "laundress"—for that is the misleading designation of the lady authorised by the authorities of the Inns to discharge the household duties of the celibate Templar—was in my time a person who had but rudimentary ideas of hygienics and was governed by the general principle of *laissez-faire*. She let things be with a vengeance and had a fine scorn for the duster and the broom. She belonged as I have said to that peculiar type of womanhood—of which the most eminent examplars are, or were then, college bed-makers. My own bed-maker at Trinity, was—not to put too fine a point upon it—as will have been gathered from my description of her, scarcely what you would call a beauty. But, as far as looks went, she undoubtedly bore away the palm from the two hideous harpies who at different times ministered to my wants as "laundresses" in the Temple. But, perhaps, it would have been unsafe to have admitted less ill-favoured representatives of womanhood into the privacy of bachelor chambers. I remember the horror of a friend of mine, now a well-known County Court judge, on finding in his chambers on his return from dining in Hall, a tall, handsome young

person who announced that she had come to apply for the vacant post of "laundress"! This was going to the other extreme and he wisely preferred a female of more mature age and fewer personal attractions.

When I became a student at the Inner Temple the old Hall was still extant—internally as plain and unpretentious as the House of Commons—though Charles Lamb complained that they had "gothicised" the entrance in his day. It was not really an ancient building and was certainly dowdy and undignified by comparison with the noble Elizabethan proportions of the Middle Temple Hall. Yet the dark, oak pannelling gave it a cosy look. The present handsome Hall was opened by the Princess Louise in 1870 amid appropriate feasting and revelry. Barristers had to appear in wig and gown and bands, and, I think, evening dress, both for the luncheon and the subsequent banquet, to the huge delight of the gamins of Fleet Street who guyed them with provoking impudence.

Among the quaint figures associated with "eating dinners" I recall two—the Steward, old Hurlstone, who robed us for Hall, and the butler Ellis. The former was a wonderfully hale septuagenarian—on the verge of octogenarianism—his memory carried him back to the days of the old Benchers of whom "Elia" has left us inimitable portraits in his delightful essay. He had often seen the "gentle Elia" himself, but never held him of much account inasmuch as he had no professional connection with the Inn. A cheerier soul than Hurlstone I never met. He carried his years lightly, married his third wife I believe, when he was seventy-five, and to the last there was a humorous twinkle in his eye and a genial smile hovering on his lips. I was something of a favourite with him, and on the eventful night of my "call" he beckoned me aside and said, with a solemn impressiveness I have never forgotten:

"A word in your ear, sir. You'll have four toasts to drink before the Benchers, and there'll be port,

sherry and Madeira to drink 'em in. Take my advice, sir, pass the port and sherry and stick to the Madeira—there's no Madeira in the world to equal that in our cellars."

I took that advice and did not repent of it. The Madeira was superb and I was as grateful to Hurlstone as Principal Robertson was to his brother's friend, the minister, in Dean Ramsay's story—which by the way, as it will no doubt be new to English readers, I may as well give while I'm in the vein. The Principal had been invited to spend some days in a country house and the minister of the parish (a jovial character) had been asked to meet him. Before dinner he went up to Dr. Robertson and addressed him confidentially:

"Doctor, I understand you are a brother of my gude freend Peter Robinson of Edinburgh, therefore I'll gie ye a piece of advice—bend weel to the Madeira at dinner, for here ye'll get little o' it after."

One might travel far nowadays without even hearing Madeira named. It has lost its place of honour among wines of the table. And it was with something of surprise that I learned not long since from a very old Cambridge and Temple friend (the announcement of whose unexpected death comes with a shock to me whilst correcting these proofs) that he had given up whisky and wine—with the exception of Madeira, a bottle of which he opened whenever he felt in need of a stimulant.

Ellis, the butler, was a little bald-headed man of rotund figure, whose face wore that happily blended expression of solemnity and conviviality which is characteristic of your true master of the cellars. There was one feat of manual dexterity which he performed every night in Hall to the admiration and delight of the younger students. It was the custom then to remove the table cloth from the high table, where the Benchers sat, at the end of dinner just before grace was said. Ellis used to fold the cloth very neatly in half and then,

with one clever jerk of the wrist bring it gliding, rippling swiftly and steadily down the long stretch of polished black oak into the basket at his side. I have never seen such a feat even attempted by anyone else. When I happened to be at the senior student's mess, I always used to call Ellis, as he was retiring flushed with pride, and congratulate him on his adroit manipulation of the cloth, and, when I had flattered him to the top of his bent, ask as a favour for a jug of the famous old " Bencher's " Ale. With a little persuasion I always gained my point; and, as soon as the Benchers had retired to their port in Parliament Chambers, and most of the dining barristers and students had departed, Ellis would bring me and my three mess-mates (we messed in fours) a good old " brown Toby " and tall glasses. It was noble tipple that Bencher's Ale—over which that matchless connoisseur of malt, George Borrow, would have smacked his lips in hearty approval.

Ellis was also collector of Taxes in the Temple and when he came round to chambers with his forms for Income tax to be filled in, the customary formula with most of us was, " No income from any source whatever." Whereat Ellis would scratch his bald head and observe drily :

" Well, for paupers with no income at all, I must say you young gents look as if you lived uncommonly well. You ought to be starvin', you know, by rights. But bless me, if you don't look more like dyin' of over eatin' and drinkin'."

Most of us, no doubt, mainly subsisted on parental allowances, but I question whether we should be allowed to dismiss the demand for income tax with such airy unconcern under the myrmidons of Mr. Lloyd George.

But though the butler thus jocosely treated the matter of starvation—there *were* barristers in my time who underwent terrible privations and indeed died from pure want of food. One member of my own Inn was found in a dying state in one of the courts off Fleet

Street and died when he was taken to the hospital. The cause of death was given as exhaustion from want of food. And there were not a few who starved grimly in secret—too proud to let their poverty and privation be known.

There was one peculiarly sad case which came under my immediate observation, for I knew the man well. He was called, I think, on the same night as myself, though very much my senior. His career had been a strange one. First, a master at Stoneyhurst College, then a Roman Catholic priest, he had "verted" to the Anglican Church, prepared himself for taking orders, and finally decided to qualify for the Bar. He was a little, grey-headed, grey-bearded man, extremely well-read, a good talker, and a very agreeable companion. In common with everyone who knew him, I thought that he had competent means of livelihood, and it was with a shock of surprise and pain that I heard that he had been arrested for stealing books from the Inner Temple Library. At his trial it came out that he was driven to steal and sell these books by sheer starvation. Every other mode of obtaining money having failed him, he was reduced in his desperation to theft. During term-time he had his dinners in Hall to fall back upon, for in those days immediate payment for dinners was not required of members of the Inn—indeed very long credit was given. But there are gaps between the terms in which there are no dinners in Hall, and in these dinnerless intervals the unfortunate man was often at his wits' end to know how or where to procure a meal. He was too proud to disclose his poverty to even the most intimate of his acquaintances, and as he was always respectably dressed, no one guessed to what dire straits he was reduced. He defended himself at his trial in a speech of such ability and eloquence that everyone in Court was moved, and the Judge, in passing sentence, said the speech was one worthy of the most eminent member of the Bar. Nevertheless, he was sentenced to a

year's imprisonment, for there had been many similar thefts from the Libraries of the Inns of Court, the perpetrators of which had escaped detection, and the Judge, I suppose, felt that an example must be made. So much sympathy, however, did the case excite among members of the profession, that a fund, amounting to a very considerable sum, was raised to give the poor fellow a start when he came out of prison. But just a month before the termination of his sentence, his mind gave way, and he was removed to a Lunatic Asylum where he was certified to be incurably insane.

Among the Benchers who used regularly to dine in Hall when I was a student was Samuel Warren, author of, " Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician," and " Ten Thousand a Year," books which had an enormous vogue when they first came out. William Archer Shee, son of Sir Martin, the well-known painter and poet, describing the receptions of Lady Blessington in his " Recollections," writes of Warren displaying there " the overweening vanity that has marred his social as well as his forensic success." In illustration of that vanity let me give an anecdote from my own experience. A fellow-student of mine at the Inner Temple came up to Town with a letter of introduction to Sam Warren, and was invited by the latter to his chambers. On entering that " august abode " of genius, the young student was heartily welcomed, and presently Samuel said, in his pompous, patronizing, but not unkindly way :

" My dear young friend, I have the greatest regard for your father, and I wish to show that regard by granting an exceptional favour to his son. Come with me into the next room."

The young student followed him, in awe-stricken silence. Then Sam, standing before an escritoire, said solemnly :

" Now, my young friend, for your father's sake I am going to do for you what I have never done for any young man before."

So saying, he slowly and deliberately unlocked and opened the escritoire.

"Come forward, my young friend."

The trembling and agitated youth stepped forward. His host raised the lid, took up a roll of paper, placed it in the young student's hands, and, as he did so, said in an indescribably impressive tone:

"Now, it is for your father's sake I grant you this favour—the roll you hold in your hand is the *Original Manuscript of "Ten Thousand a Year."*

The Duke of Wellington was unkind enough to say of that immortal work:

"It is obvious not only that Mr. Warren never had ten thousand a year, but that he never even knew anyone who had such an income."

Sam Warren was a perky, fresh-coloured, pleasant-spoken little man, with an upstanding crop of white hair, his eye-glasses were worn in a way which gave his face a perpetual sort of Paul Pry expression. He was fond of coming up to the senior students' mess, and, with a beaming air of condescension, asking us if we had enjoyed our dinner, if the fare met with our approval, or if we had any fault to find with the cuisine or cellar of the Inn. He would, perhaps, repeat some trivial little anecdote of his own experiences as a student and leave us, as he no doubt thought, amazed and delighted at the high honour conferred upon us.

He was a constant attendant, too, at the Temple Church on Sunday afternoons. At that time Dr. Vaughan was Master of the Temple, and attracted large congregations in the morning. But he was never quite at home, I thought, in the Temple pulpit. His 'Varsity sermons at St. Mary's, Cambridge, were admirable. I have never heard any preacher adapt himself so sympathetically and successfully to the temper of young men as Dr. Vaughan did when preaching to undergraduates. But he was not equally happy among the Templars. There was something stiff and stilted both

in matter and manner. His domiciliary visits to Chambers were resented, and he was sometimes plainly given to understand that his moral homilies were offensive. Nor was he on the best of terms with the Benchers, who had to remind him on the occasion of one memorable dispute between them, that though the Crown had the appointment to the Mastership—the stipend, all but a beggarly £100 a year, was entirely in the hands of the Benchers, to withhold or advance at their pleasure.

Dr. Vaughan wished to throw the Temple Church open to the public, and maintained that it was legally in his power to do so. The Benchers retorted that the Master was no doubt within his rights in opening the Church to the public, but that *they* had control of the gates of the Temple (always closed on Sundays) and that if he persisted in his objectionable proposal, they should exercise their right of refusing admission to the Temple precincts to any but members of the two Inns.

On another occasion, Dr. Vaughan intimated that complaint had been made to him that the morning services at the Temple Church were too long, and suggested curtailing the music. The Benchers agreed with him that the services *were* too long, but proposed that the curtailment should be in the sermon, which seldom lasted less than forty minutes. In both cases, the Master thought it prudent to let matters remain in *statu quo*. I have in my mind's eye as I write a vivid picture of Dr. Vaughan, as I used to see him almost daily, either passing through the Temple Courts, or taking his constitutional along the Embankment—the broad, solid figure, the almost archi-diaconal hat, the glossy black coat and trousers, the shining square-toed boots, on which his eyes were always demurely fixed, the almost Jesuitical slyness of his upward or sidelong glance—not a wicked or worldly slyness, but just enough to remind you that there was in him something of the wisdom of the serpent mingled with the harmlessness of

the dove. But, apart from a somewhat pedagogic starchedness, the Master was a striking and justly-admired personality, an able man, a good man, and a kind man.

I have heard many instances of his kindness—the following came under my own observation. There was at the Middle Temple a student of humble birth, generally known as "The Bagman"—one of those harmless, inoffensive creatures whom it would be cruel to term "bounders," but for whom, nevertheless, it would be difficult to find any more fitting descriptive epithet. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, positively objectionable about him, but his vacuous face, his hay-coloured hair and whiskers, his general air of shop-assistant seemed quite out of place among barristers and students. He lived with his mother in humble lodgings over an Italian Warehouse in Kennington. For Dr. Vaughan he had a hero-worship which, in the eyes of Thomas Carlyle, would have redeemed all his shortcomings. "The Bagman" fell ill—so ill that his life was despaired of, and in his illness he often spoke of the Master of the Temple, lamenting that he was no longer able to hear his sermons, or see his face. His mother, a simple, worthy soul, hinted that perhaps Dr. Vaughan might come and see him if he knew how ill he was. Her son looked at her in amazement. How could she suppose for a moment that so great a man as the Master of the Temple could be asked to come to such poor folks and such mean rooms. The idea was preposterous. But the mother thought otherwise. One evening she slipped out, and, greatly daring, called on the Master at his big house in the Temple. His kindly manner and soft, low voice set all her doubts at rest. She never told her boy what she had done, and his amazement and joy when Dr. Vaughan called to see him the next day were beyond the power of words to describe. Three or four times a week, the Master found time to come and sit and read with "The Bagman" till he was convalescent,

and left London for the little Devonshire farm which belonged to him. His grateful mother always maintained that it was Dr. Vaughan's kindness that saved her son's life. Perhaps it was.

But in those days the great attraction of the Temple Church on Sundays was the afternoon service. For then the famous Temple trio, Lewis Thomas, bass, George Perren, tenor, and Edward Young, alto, were to be heard in their magnificent rendering of the anthems. And above all, there was the reading and preaching of Ainger, the Reader (afterwards Canon and Master of the Temple). This combination of music and elocution, both exceptionally fine, drew to the Church a host of students and barristers, whom nothing else, I suspect, would have attracted to a religious service. There still linger in my ears the deep, majestic tones of Thomas's voice in that great bass recitative from Solomon's Prayer:

"But will God indeed dwell upon the earth? Behold the Heaven and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee! How much less this house that I have builded!"

And Ainger! What a charm there was in that melodious, perfectly modulated voice of his! How the grand old Bible stories in the Lessons took on a new dramatic interest as he read them! And his sermons—how pleasantly the graceful English, the fresh original thoughts, the rhythm of the sentences, fell in those silver accents on the ear! Among all my memories of the Temple, there are none that I recall with a pleasure more serene and wholesome than those Sunday afternoons at the Temple Church in the Readership of Ainger.

Sam Warren, as I have said, was always there, ready to pounce upon the Reader, after the service was over, link his arm familiarly in Ainger's, and bear him off ostentatiously along the Strand towards Club-land. Lord Chelmsford, too, an ex-Lord Chancellor, was one of Ainger's constant hearers—a tall, stiff, stately figure,

with a fine face, but so absolutely expressionless during the service that the features always suggested to me the carved wooden effigy of a Red Indian Chief.

Ainger's appearance was picturesque—the frail, bent figure, the smooth, boyish face, the snow-white hair—a singular blend of youth and age. It was a thoughtful, serious face, and yet when you looked into it at close quarters, you saw the humorist lurking behind the preacher's seriousness. He had a very fine gift of humour, Elian in its sublety, as his face was Elian in its expression of humorous melancholy. He was a master of quips and cranks and wreathed smiles, as inveterate a punster as his own beloved Charles Lamb. He was, moreover, an excellent whist player! I last saw him one Good Friday at Hampstead Heath. His fragile, attenuated frame looked as if a strong blast of wind would whirl it away like a withered leaf. He leaned heavily on the arm of a vigorous and athletic young man, whose robust physique made the other's look the more piteously feeble. Yet it was not till sixteen years later that the bright spirit of Alfred Ainger quitted its "tenement of clay."

I have mentioned in a previous section the owner of a marvellous moustache which out-rivalled even that of the surgeon of the *Shenandoah*. The owner of that moustache was a barrister on the Norfolk Circuit, who never failed, when in Town, to exhibit that hirsute marvel in the Temple Church at both matins and evensong. It was not only the largest I ever saw, but the most carefully and elaborately groomed. The man must have spent hours in oiling and curling the "knightly growth that fringed his lip." It was of a rich auburn colour, the natural tint, I have no doubt, intensified by unguents. When the sun shone upon its glossy sheen it was a fascinating object. Women gazed at it with admiration, men with envy. The face was worthy of the moustache, large, heavy, impassive. You felt that the man's self-esteem rested securely on a basis that could not

be disturbed. The moustache was an accomplished fact, a great possession, a high achievement in which Nature and Art had both had a hand, a thing not to be gainsaid, a palpable, unmistakable glory that envy could not eclipse, nor malice dim. Now and then he would let a single caressing finger wander lightly as a butterfly over the well-groomed surface—either to draw the attention of the onlookers, or to gratify his own sense of beauty. It was said of him that though he went on Circuit regularly, he refused all briefs, fearful lest the opening of his mouth to speak should destroy the symmetry of the exquisitely trimmed moustache.

I remember a somewhat similar case at Cambridge. There was a contemporary of mine at Trinity whose head was an almost exact replica of the Stratford-on-Avon Shakespeare. The " victorious brow," the whole contour of the face was there, and the conscious " double " took care that every detail in the resemblance should be minutely reproduced. Men said, surely there must be a brain to correspond with that Shakespearean nobility of forehead. But there wasn't. At least no one could ever discover any, for the " double " could hardly ever be induced to open his lips. He had no wish to destroy the illusion.

William Black (whom I have often met in Temple Chambers and always associate with the wild, thrilling chant in Gaelic of the " Gathering of the Macgregors ") used to tell a story of his own experiences with a " man who was like Shakespeare." Black and a friend once came across a miserable waif of humanity, I forget where or under what circumstances, whose extraordinary resemblance to the most popular portrait of Shakespeare struck them both with amazement. Black insisted upon that it that a man with such a noble head must have brains to match. Here was a colossal intellect smothered by its environment, stunted, dwarfed, unable to attain the majestic heights for which Nature intended it. Fired by this glowing fantasy, Black accosted the

Shakespearean replica. His reply was intelligent, there was a fire in his eye suggestive of the poet's orb in " a fine phrenzy rolling." He was practically homeless and not far from the verge of starvation. Black took him home, a room was set apart for him. He had already modestly confessed to having a wish to write poetry ; every inducement and opportunity was offered him to gratify his wish. Days passed, the clouded brow and distraught manner of the bantling convinced Black that he was in the throes of composition, and that some remarkable effort in verse would be the result. Then one day, with glowing cheeks and eyes aflame, the poet presented his patron with the result of his incubation. The verses were good, distinctly good, if not perhaps quite Shakespearean, and Black read them aloud in triumph to his friends. This, he said, was but the first crude offspring of a Muse that had been cramped and fettered by its surroundings. The next effort would more than fulfil the promise of the first. It was somewhat long in coming, but at last the poet produced it with an air of triumph, as who should say : " Your hopes, my patron, are now realised, your generous confidence in my powers is rewarded. Behold a work of genius ! "

Black had two friends with him when the poet handed him the Manuscript. With eager hands he unfolded it, glanced at one friend who had been incredulous of the foundling's genius—" What did I tell you ? " he murmured, then unfolded the MS. and read :

> " Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean roll !
> Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain."

Black paused, his face grew very red, he looked up, puzzled, at the beaming poet.

" But—but—" he stammered, " these are not your own verses."

" Oh ! yes they are ! " retorted the poet confidently, " I wrote them myself."

"Wrote them out, you mean," said the sceptical friend drily.

A flush of annoyance rose to the poet's Shakespearean brow.

"They are my own composition, that is what I mean."

Poor Black was in a terrible fix, the humiliating truth was beginning to force itself upon him. He had been cherishing an impostor. Yet he spoke kindly.

"I think you are making some mistake. You have given me the wrong manuscript, I am sure. For these, you know, are well-known lines from Byron."

The poet's cheeks went crimson.

"Let me see the manuscript," he said hurriedly, and, glancing at it, muttered, "Oh! yes I see—a mistake," and then quickly left the room. The roar of derisive laughter from the two sceptics must have been the reverse of music to his ear. Subsequent investigation revealed the source of his inspiration in a book of elegant extracts for students of elocution, to which the names of the authors were not attached. The first effort of the foundling's muse was found in the same pages. The next day the pseudo-bard was dismissed with contumely. After that William Black had no use for men who were like Shakespeare.

I have hinted at tragedies in Temple Chambers. I remember a rather remarkable one in my own time. There was a man of my Inn whom I knew first under the somewhat plebeian patronymic of Mullens, but he subsequently proved to the satisfaction of the College of Heralds that he was lineally descended from the old Norman family of the de Moleyns, who of course, came over with the Conqueror, and he obtained the legal right to use that name, instead of its base corruption, and to adopt the armorial bearings of the ancient house. Mullens, or de Moleyns, was a tall, dark man, of fiery temper and eccentric manners. In the heat of argument his gesticulations were formidable and menacing, and he

often seemed to be on the verge of resorting to physical force to convince an opponent who was proof against his logic. He was away for some time abroad, I forget whether on business or pleasure, and returned suddenly and unexpectedly. No one knew that he was in London till the startling rumour ran through the Temple that de Moleyns had been found murdered in his chambers. Further inquiry elicited the fact that de Moleyns was not actually dead, but that no hopes were entertained of his recovery. His laundress, it appeared, on entering the chambers in the morning had, to her amazement and horror, found her master, whom she believed to be still abroad, lying face downwards on the hearthrug in a pool of blood. She rushed out and fetched in one of the Temple policemen; a doctor was sent for, who, on examination of the unfortunate man, found that he was still alive but that his skull was badly fractured. He had evidently been struck down from behind, and the coal-hammer with which the wound had been inflicted was discovered lying in a corner of the room covered with clotted blood and hair.

At first the affair seemed " wrop in mis'try," but as de Moleyn's clerk, a lad of seventeen, did not turn up the next morning, suspicion fastened on him. He had disappeared and left no clue to his whereabouts. A warrant was issued for his arrest, but nearly three weeks elapsed before he was captured. He was remanded until his master, who had meanwhile recovered from his serious wounds, was well enough to appear against him. It was not much, however, that de Moleyns had to tell. He had returned to England, he said, without giving notice of his arrival to anyone. He went straight to his chambers, let himself in, and called to his clerk. He remembered receiving a terrific blow from behind, after that all was a blank, till consciousness slowly returned to him in the hospital.

What motive could the clerk have had for this murderous assault on his master? That question was not

left long unanswered. De Moleyns had a very valuable library of law books bound in calf. These were apparently on their shelves intact, but on examination it was discovered that only the covers were there, the interiors of the books had been neatly cut out, and the library was a hollow sham. The clerk subsequently confessed that, at the instigation of another clerk, he had cut out the pages of some hundreds of volumes, and sold them for waste paper at fourpence per pound! He had arranged with his accomplice to carry out another robbery on a much larger scale, and decamp with the proceeds. But the sudden and wholly unexpected arrival of his master frustrated his designs, and, seeing exposure and ruin staring him in the face, he had stolen behind his master with the coal-hammer in his hand, and struck him down. It was a marvel that de Moleyns escaped with his life. I saw him once or twice afterwards but could not discover that the murderous blow had made him any more eccentric than he was before. I am almost inclined to think that the crack from the coal-hammer left him saner and soberer. But the remedy was too drastic to be recommended for general use in cases of eccentricity.

One does not expect to find murderers among one's brother Templars, yet the perpetrator of a series of the most cold-blooded murders of modern times, was a member of the Middle Temple, and I knew him. He passed as the Count de Tourville, or, to give him his full string of names, Henri Dieudonnè Pineau de Tourville, and was for some time popular, both in the Temple and the West End. It was in the early seventies that I made his acquaintance, and I confess that I was rather attracted by him at first. He was a good-looking, vivacious Frenchman, with an irresistible bonhomie which carried one away, in spite of a suspicion that it was not really genuine. He had, apparently, plenty of money, and spent it lavishly; there was, however, a swagger and ostentation about his expenditure which

would not have been considered quite good form in an Englishman. Champagne breakfasts, big dinners, four-horse drags to Epsom and Sandown Park, picnics on the river, sumptuous repasts at the Star and Garter, Richmond—all this would have been pronounced vulgar display in anyone else. But somehow de Tourville carried it off successfully, and those who partook of his hospitality saw no taint of vulgarity in it. At this time he was a widower residing at a handsome house which he had bought, at Craven Hill, Paddington. He lived in very good style there: his dinners, particularly, to which his Temple friends were often invited, were quite famous in certain circles of society. No one at that time had the slightest suspicion that de Tourville was other than he appeared to be in rank and circumstances. Among women he was a general favourite, and in the set in which he moved there were many who would willingly have become Countess No. 2. But de Tourville had a keen eye to the main chance and his choice fell on a rich widow, Madeline Miller, who had a very pretty house not far from his, at Southwick Crescent, Hyde Park. She was a woman of about thirty-five, who dressed well and could make herself look attractive. I only saw her once, when I happened to meet her with de Tourville in Regent Street, and he introduced her to me as his future wife. They were married soon afterwards, and I remember the shock with which I read in the newspaper the announcement of her tragic death whilst on her honeymoon. She was killed by an accidental fall over a precipice in the Tyrol.

Five months later I was astounded to hear on arriving at Chambers one morning in November that de Tourville had been arrested at his house the previous evening and was to be brought up at Bow Street that day charged with the murder of his wife. I went with a friend to the Police Court to learn what possible grounds there could be for a charge which seemed so preposterous, for

the last person in the world I should have suspected of murderous proclivities was de Tourville.

When de Tourville came into the dock I noted a great change in him. His dress and whole appearance looked flashy. He had indescribably deteriorated. Some allowance, of course, had to be made for the circumstances and surroundings. No man can be expected to look his best in the dock, whether he be innocent or guilty. But there was something in de Tourville's appearance more than could be thus accounted for. To me it seemed as if a mask had dropped from him, and he were suddenly revealed in his true character—a character totally different from that he had hitherto shown to the world. He waved his be-ringed hand jauntily to my friend and myself when his eye fell upon us and his manner of doing so did not prepossess either of us in his favour. He had been arrested on an extradition warrant, at the instance of the Austrian Government, on the charge of murdering his wife by pushing her over a precipice in the Stelvio Pass.

At the inquest held by the District Judge on the spot it was taken as proved that the unfortunate lady had met her death by accident, and the verdict of the Court was that her husband was in no way to blame for it. But fresh evidence came to light after the inquest which pointed so strongly to foul play that the Austrian Authorities determined to apply for de Tourville's extradition.

There were, I think, six remands, before Mr. Vaughan, the Bow Street magistrate, gave his decision that de Tourville must be extradited. By this time there was little doubt of the Count's guilt in the mind of anyone who had followed the evidence and noted his revolting callousness in the dock. The Austrian trial resulted in a verdict of guilty and he was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment in a fortress. After serving eight years he died in prison.

But it was the astounding revelations of de Tourville's

infamy at the Austrian trial that created most sensation. It was proved that the man was no Count—but a low-born adventurer—had been a waiter at a Parisian restaurant—had there made the acquaintance of a rich and eccentric Englishman, named Cotton, had been engaged by the latter as courier and confidential servant —had accompanied his master to Constantinople, and there all trace of Mr. Cotton was lost. He was never seen alive by any one who knew him after he had passed the Golden Horn. His whole life had been so eccentric, and he had for so long been in the habit of disappearing for months and even years without letting any one know of his whereabouts that he was not missed. But the Austrian detectives had no doubt that he was robbed and murdered by his confidential servant, Henri Pinet, who about a year later appeared at Scarborough as Monsieur le Comte de Tourville, was the "comet of a season" and married a rich heiress. This lady's mother, however, kept so determined a hold on the purse strings that de Tourville was reduced to the necessity of shooting her. It was cleverly done and thanks to a bribed young surgeon and a venal Scotland Yard Inspector, the verdict of the coroner's jury was "accidental death"—de Tourville's version of the tragedy being that his mother-in-law had accidentally shot herself whilst examining a loaded pistol of his. His wife soon after fell into a lingering sickness and died. On the subsequent examination of the body, after de Tourville's committal for trial on the charge of murdering his second wife, it was proved that he had made away with his first wife, too, by administering powdered glass. The only child by his first marriage, on whom his wife's money was settled, narrowly escaped death by burning, for de Tourville set fire to the house, hoping thus to get rid of the child, but in this scheme he met with disappointment. This was his record when I first knew him. Three actual murders, and an intended one frustrated, though of course, these crimes were then unknown. The murder of his

second wife was equally cold-blooded—in each case money was his sole object. His first wife's fortune was £30,000—that of his second £70,000, of which £40,000 was settled on him by will. And this cruel, crafty, merciless devil was the man whose society was eagerly cultivated by men and women, whom every one voted to be the best of good fellows, and who was for a time a popular member of the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple! The remembrance of the Count de Tourville makes my gorge rise and is distinctly the most gruesome and unpleasant of all my Temple memories.

V

Stories of the Bench and The Bar

I was sitting one day in the old Bail Court at Westminster, soon after I was called, reading the paper and waiting for the Judge to come back from his lunch, when I overheard the following colloquy between two working men behind me.

Said one, who evidently prided himself on his knowledge of men and things:

"Bill, d'ye see them young chaps a-sitting there in their wigs and gowns, with nowt to do but read the papers?"

"Ay! I see 'em."

"Well, it's cruel 'ard on 'em. For ye see they belongs to the strictest Trades Union as there is. Not one on 'em is allowed to take a case under a guinea fee. What's the consekence? why, the 'arf of 'em is out o' work, not earnin' a penny piece, and 'ow they lives, Gawd only knows. Now, if they was allowed to take cases at five bob or even 'arf a crown a-piece, them young chaps as ye see there a-doin' nuffin', might be earnin' their thirty bob and may be their two quid a week!"

The remarks were not flattering, but there was a grim soupçon of truth in them which gave them humorous point. A good many of the briefless ones sitting there in wig and gown would undoubtedly have been glad to earn "thirty bob or two quid a week." Day after day I and my pal in Chambers trudged from the Temple to Westminster and sat, arrayed in full forensic "fig," from ten to four in one or other of the Courts, imbibing experience in the tricks of litigation, and when the Court rose, we strolled back, had a game of billiards at Gatti's

Rooms under the arches at Charing Cross, and then dined in Hall. But though briefs did not come my way, save, as angels' visits, few and far between, I found attending the Courts a very fascinating pastime.

Breach of promise cases were no doubt the most entertaining. There were then two Q.C's. who afforded immense amusement to the Junior Bar when they were pitted against one another in such cases. The one was Digby Seymour, an Irishman, with a fine gift of florid rhetoric, and the other Montagu Chambers, who had been a Lieutenant in the Navy, and still drew his half pay. Digby Seymour was invariably for the plaintiff and Chambers as invariably for the defendant. The claims of a good-looking young woman suing a faithless lover could have had no better exponent than the eloquent Irishman. But Montagu Chambers, if he did not possess his rival's eloquence, had something which stood him in equally good stead. If he had not a fluent tongue, he had a deaf ear, and he made very clever use of it. If the plaintiff were a particularly pretty and modest young woman with a soft voice and sympathetic manner, Montagu Chambers would put his hand to his ear when cross-examining, and say :—" My dear young lady, you must pardon me, as an old man very hard of hearing, if I ask you to raise your voice."

The plaintiff would do so ; but, with a pitying smile and a straining forward of hand and ear, Chambers would say :

" My dear young lady, I have no doubt that you have what Shakespeare tells us is an excellent thing in woman—a soft low voice ; but, unlike my learned friend, I am denied the pleasure of hearing such sweet sounds. I'm afraid I must ask you to raise your voice a little more."

And he would go on in this way till the plaintiff had literally to scream at him and became so exasperated that she would either sulk or take refuge in angry tears. In any case she made an exhibition of herself which was not calculated to prepossess the jury in her favour.

But the climax of Montagu Chambers' art came when he rose to address the jury for the defendant. He would sit with his eyes closed during Digby Seymour's opening rhapsodical oration, every word of which he heard, for he was not nearly as deaf as he pretended to be. Then, when his turn came to address the jury he would say :

" Gentlemen, I regret that my natural infirmity has debarred me from the treat of listening to my learned friend's eloquence. I can therefore only imagine what he is likely to have said. No doubt he would use such arguments as this the obvious argument of a man with no case"—then would follow a caustic epitome of what Digby Seymour actually *had* said. " Now, gentlemen, to men of the world like yourselves, such arguments, even if adorned with my learned friend's specious eloquence, can be refuted with ridiculous ease, and cannot possibly have any weight." And forthwith he would proceed to put the defendant's case with a raillery of the plaintiff and a caustic criticism of Digby Seymour's flowery pleading which generally turned the scale. If he did not win the case outright for his client, he always succeeded in very materially reducing the damages.

There was a story told against Digby Seymour in connection with a breach of promise case, which, however, I believe really applied to a predecessor of his at the Bar. The plaintiff was a very handsome young woman—she was artfully dressed up to the part—and during her counsel's opening address she was placed in a prominent position in the well of the court, where the jury could feast their eyes upon her charms. When she entered the witness-box the gaze of an admiring Court was fixed upon her, and everyone agreed with her counsel that she had charms which one would have thought no man could resist, and that the conduct of the defendant in refusing to marry her was abominable and inexcusable. She gave her evidence with a modest reluctance which evidently had a moving effect on the

susceptible jury. Everyone thought she was safe to get swinging damages.

The counsel for the defendant rose to cross-examine her.

"Have you ever concealed from the defendant anything of importance relating to yourself?"

The plaintiff hesitated, grew red and replied hesitatingly:

"No."

"Ah! perhaps you did not think it of importance. My learned friend has expatiated on your personal charms, and, I will admit, with justice, so far as they are visible to the jury. But I must ask you, did you ever tell the defendant that you had a cork leg?"

No answer.

"You left him to make that discovery for himself?"

No answer.

"Did you not realise that he must find out the deception in the long run?"

No answer.

"Well, let me put the question as plainly and simply as I can. *Have* you a cork leg?"

The plaintiff buried her face in her hands and burst into tears. The jury found a verdict for the defendant, to whom the existence of a very cleverly manufactured cork leg had not been revealed until he happened to make the discovery for himself, with a shock which immediately cooled his amatory ardour.

I remember a curious case which revealed an iniquitous system of swindling in breach of promise cases. A gentleman of position met a very attractive lady at a fashionable watering-place, and certain tender passages between them resulted in his making, so she alleged, a promise to marry her. There was a quarrel between them, they parted, and soon afterwards a writ for breach of promise was served on him. To avoid publicity he was prepared to settle the matter, but, fortunately for him, his solicitor discovered that the woman was the mistress of an attorney, who had already appeared for

her in five such actions, all of which had been compromised for large sums of money. The two had worked in concert and plied their nefarious trade successfully till the "plant" was accidentally discovered. They made tracks before justice could overtake them.

There have been some so-called "Matrimonial Agencies" which have made a practice of keeping a number of "decoys" to levy blackmail by the threat of bringing actions for breach of promise. And not so very long ago a solicitor who made a speciality of bringing actions for breach of promise on behalf of barmaids was struck off the rolls for unprofessional conduct in the way he procured evidence to support these cases. It was said that in five years he had brought upwards of seventy of such actions, and at least fifty of them had been settled out of court on terms remunerative both to the solicitor and his client.

I have always thought that if justice is to be done in breach of promise cases a jury of women would be more efficacious than a jury of men. This, of course, is from a man's point of view. What kind of a figure would the most attractive plaintiff cut before a jury of her own sex? What use in faking herself up to look interesting for *their* benefit! In vain would be all her tears, all her modest airs, all her soft pleading tones. They would sit there, those grim British matrons, and stare stonily at her. *They* would not be taken in by her tricks. They know how it's done. "They've been there."

As a journalist I have naturally taken an interest in libel cases where newspapers have been the defendants, and have sat through a good many such trials, with the result that I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing riskier than seeking to recover the bubble reputation in the Law Courts. I will give two or three instances of cases in my own experience in which newspaper criticisms have been submitted to a jury with results more agreeable to the defendant than the plaintiff.

Mr. Hepworth Dixon had not much to congratulate himself upon in the issue of his action for libel against the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1870. The P.M.G. had described that then popular author, whose "Spiritual Wives" had created a considerable sensation, as "a successful compiler of obscene literature and vamped up travels." Not often have I heard a more racy cross-examination than that to which Sir John Karslake subjected the plaintiff in respect of his relations with the queer people whose singular marriage customs he described with such minute detail in "Spiritual Wives." Hepworth Dixon's face when he was blandly asked to explain to the jury what he meant by "innocent endearments," and whether he considered the Welsh practice of couples "bundling" prior to marriage merely a "religious exercise to prove that the spirit was stronger than the flesh," still lingers in my memory as one of the most comical of my forensic experiences. The jury gave the plaintiff one farthing damages, which he could scarcely have considered an adequate solatium for all he had undergone at the hands of counsel.

A similar coin was awarded to "Jemmy" Whistler in his libel action against John Ruskin which I thoroughly enjoyed from start to finish. The great art critic in his *Fors Clavigera* had written thus of "Jemmy's" "Nocturne in Black and Gold" at the Grosvenor Gallery:— "For Mr. Whistler's own sake, no less than for the protection of the purchaser, Sir Coutts Lindsay ought not to have admitted works into the gallery in which the ill-educated conceit of the artist so nearly approached the aspect of wilful imposture. I have seen and heard much of Cockney impudence before now, but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask 200 guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face." Beyond the interesting facts that he was of American parentage and born in St. Petersburg, between which city and Moscow his father had engineered a railway, I don't know that much was added to our knowledge by the examination and

cross-examination of the plaintiff. But the cross-examiner certainly did not get much change out of "Jemmy." Asked whether he did not think it monstrously exorbitant to charge 200 guineas for a work which did not cost him half-a-dozen hours of labour, he retorted effectively that it was not the few hours that he charged for, but the skill it had taken a lifetime to acquire. He only got his farthing, however, and wore it proudly on his watch-chain till the day of his death.

But even this small coin was more than W. S. Gilbert got when he sued the *Pall Mall Gazette* for describing "The Wicked World," which ran for 175 nights, as "coarse, vulgar and indecent," for the jury gave a verdict for the defendants with the remarkable rider, which provoked great amusement in Court, *that they thought both the article and the play perfectly innocent!*

Robert Buchanan, whom I knew and liked, though he was not generally popular, was much more lucky in his case against the *Examiner*. That journal, long since defunct, in reviewing a remarkable and erotic poem entitled "Jonas Fisher," which had just been published anonymously, declared that it must be the work "either of Robert Buchanan or the Devil," adding that "the weight of probability inclined to the first of these alternatives." Now it so happened that the poem was by neither of the personages named by the *Examiner* but was from the pen of Lord Southesk. Buchanan wrote denying the authorship. This brought Swinburne into the fray with a letter headed "The Devil's Due." Swinburne had an old grudge against Buchanan, who, under the *nom de guerre* of "Thomas Maitland," had in the *Contemporary Review* fiercely attacked "The Fleshly School" of which Swinburne was held to be the leader. So the poet set about his critic, called him a "multi-faced idyllist of the gutter," "a polypseudonymous lyrist and libeller," a "skulk," and a few other choice expressions worthy of a bard whose vocabulary of Billingsgate vituperation was the terror of London

cabbies. Buchanan succeeded in convincing the jury that he had been seriously libelled, and was awarded £150 damages.

But this was a trifle compared with the solatium which a Philistine but sympathetic jury applied to the wounded feelings of Richard Belt, sculptor, when C. B. Lawes, the famous Cambridge athlete and oarsman, and amateur sculptor to boot, branded him in *Vanity Fair* as an impostor and a fraud. It was alleged by Lawes that the busts and pieces of sculpture which Belt palmed off as his own were really done by " ghosts " in his employ, or at any rate " invested with artistic merit " by other hands than his own. I don't think I have ever heard such conflicting evidence as in this *cause célèbre*—evidence of witnesses whose high position and reputation rendered it impossible to doubt that they were speaking what they honestly believed to be the truth. The sympathies of the public were all on the side of Belt, whom they regarded as a poor persecuted man of genius, who, because he was of humble origin, was hunted down by jealous aristocrats. Indignant lovers of fair play subscribed liberally towards Belt's expenses. On the other side were arranged in solid phalanx all the great artists of the day. The Royal Academicians to a man were hostile to Belt and declared that he was incapable of investing any work with artistic merit—a phrase of which the public got heartily sick before the long trial was over. Sir Frederick Leighton, then President of the Royal Academy, Sir John Millais, Mr. Thorneycroft, were among the notabilities called for the defence, and they were unanimous in declaring that in their opinion Belt was absolutely incapable of executing the works which he claimed as his own. The Judge (Baron Huddleston), feeling probably as confused as the jury, at last announced his intention of having a stage erected in Court, and letting Mr. Belt execute a bust of some independent person whilst the trial was going on. It was finally decided that a room should be set apart for the plaintiff

to work in, under such supervision as would render it impossible for him to receive any assistance, and the model chosen was a gentleman named Pagliatti—a bust of whom was already among the " exhibits " in Court—an undeniably remarkable work of art which the plaintiff swore had been solely executed by himself.

Belt worked away at the new bust, under the conditions imposed, and it was produced in Court and set side by side with the first bust. The second bust was undoubtedly a good likeness of Pagliatti, and to the untrained eye seemed quite equal to the one which was admitted to be a work of art. In vain Sir Frederick Leighton and his illustrious brother Academicians pointed out that there was no artistic merit in the second bust—that it was not in any way comparable with the first. The jury could see no difference sufficient to warrant them in coming to the conclusion that the same man could not have produced the two busts. Then, still further to bewilder them, there came forward three unimpeachable witnesses—Mr. Morris, an artist of repute, though not an Academician, the Hon. Alexander Yorke, and Canon Wilkinson, who all swore that they had seen Mr. Belt execute from start to finish three busts which were admitted, even by the Royal Academicians, to have genuine artistic merit, such as they alleged it was impossible that the plaintiff could have imparted to them. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Lady Wiltshire, and (the fact was significant) Lady Diana Huddleston, wife of the presiding Judge, were all patronesses and warm supporters of the plaintiff and were in Court every day. Of course Philistinism prevailed, the Judge's summing-up was supremely Philistinic, and the jury, after a trial of forty-three days, awarded Richard Belt £5,000 damages. The plaintiff received an ovation, for the general public was delighted with the verdict.

They were, perhaps, a little ashamed of their enthusiasm when a couple of years or so later Richard Belt again made his appearance in a Court of Law—but this

time under very different circumstances—for he stood in the dock with his brother, charged with obtaining money under false pretences from Sir William Neville Abdy, who died but a few months ago. The jury acquitted the brother but found the prisoner, Richard Belt, guilty, and he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour. But it is only fair to Belt to say that this verdict did not necessarily stultify the other. Belt, himself, who is still living, says that he hopes yet to vindicate himself fully, and in any case the fact of his conviction has no real bearing upon the truth or falsity of his claim to be an artistic sculptor. He never, by the way, got a farthing of his damages, for Mr. (now, Sir Charles) Lawes, having then no independent income, on the advice of his solicitor, passed through the Bankruptcy Court.

Another libel case in which I was interested, and the development of which I watched eagerly in Court, was that in which Mr. J. Neville Maskelyne obtained £10,000 damages (the highest, so far as I am aware, ever awarded in a libel action) against Irving Bishop, the well-known thought-reader. It was a curious case : both Mr. Maskelyne and Mr. Labouchère openly expressed their doubts of the genuineness of Irving Bishop's alleged feats in thought-reading, especially a sensational one performed at Liverpool. The brilliant idea occurred to Irving Bishop to publish a bogus copy of *Truth*, exactly like the "real Simon Pure" in every respect—and in the faked-up journal he wrote a stinging attack on Labby and Maskelyne, whom he accused of a villainous conspiracy to damage his character. Maskelyne he branded as "Jago, the plate-spinner," "the wax-work man," "a delirious vagabond devoid of honourable instincts," "the blackest of a villainous brace of scoundrels." Irving Bishop made no defence. I don't think he even entered an appearance, and the jury awarded the plaintiff £10,000 damages—afterwards reduced to £500 on appeal, but the popular magician, I fancy, never saw the colour

of Irving Bishop's money, and, being left to pay his own costs, was a very considerable loser by his victory.

The fact that Sir Hardinge Giffard (now Lord Halsbury) was leading counsel for Belt in the great libel case I have alluded to, reminds me that the most extraordinary scene I ever witnessed in a Court of Law was one in which the ex-Lord Chancellor figured prominently. It was at Marlborough Street Police Court on July 7th, 1869, when Sir Hardinge appeared to defend the present Lord Carrington, who was charged with assaulting Mr. Grenville Murray, editor and proprietor of the "Queen's Messenger," a journal which had gained an evil notoriety by its scandalously libellous articles on public men. It was printed at the same offices as a paper with which I was connected, and as I knew the sub-editor well, and had also made the acquaintance of Grenville Murray, I went to hear the case. Grenville Murray, known far and wide as "The Roving Englishman," was a natural son of the Duke of Buckingham, and one of the most brilliant and racy writers of his time. He had published in "The Queen's Messenger" an abominable libel on the second Lord Carrington, father of the present Earl, and the latter had publicly horsewhipped him in St. James' Street when he was coming out of his club. For this assault, Grenville Murray was ill-advised enough to issue a summons against his lordship. The object of the defendant was to prove that Grenville Murray himself had written the article and therefore richly deserved his castigation. After a lot of conflicting evidence had been heard, including a counter-charge of perjury against the prosecutor, the Magistrate adjourned the case. Scarcely had he announced his intention to do so, when a rush was made by some of Murray's friends for a box which it was alleged contained MSS. stolen from the "Queen's Messenger" offices and intended to be used in evidence in the perjury charge. Around that box there raged, for I suppose nearly a quarter of an hour, a fight as fierce and fell as that for the body of

Patroclus or that described by Macaulay, in the "Lays" over the corpse of Valerius. Noble lords, eminent Queen's counsel, solicitors, clerks, witnesses, to the number of thirty or forty, were engaged in that desperate melée. Personally, having no special interest in the proceedings, I kept neutral on the fringe of the fray. Hats were smashed, eyes blackened, noses set bleeding, glasses broken, inkstands hurled to and fro, till at last a strong body of police quelled the riot and ejected the furious combatants. Sir Hardinge Giffard, who had been in the thick of the fighting, using his fists vigorously, emerged from Court with flushed, bruised, perspiring face and shirt front drenched in ink. The Magistrate, Mr. Knox, if I remember rightly, looked aghast and horror-stricken from the bench at such a scene, as, I should imagine, has never been witnessed before or since in any English Court of Justice.

Grenville Murray funked facing the perjury charge—a warrant was issued for his arrest, but he bolted and was outlawed. The "Queen's Messenger" died suddenly the next week. Its fugitive Editor, however, had the audacity to return to England in disguise more than once. On one of these occasions I met him at the printing office from which the "Queen's Messenger" had emanated. His disguise was so perfect that I should not have recognised him had not the printer, a canny and cautious Scotsman, thought it wise to divulge his identity and swear me to secrecy. Subsequently, Grenville Murray was associated with Edmund Yates in the production of "The World." His stormy and adventurous life closed at Passy on the 20th December, 1881.

I have alluded casually to Sir John Karslake as a cross-examiner. He was familiarly and affectionately known at the Bar as "Handsome Jack," and well deserved the epithet, for his tall figure (he stood 6ft. 4ins.), fine features and stately bearing, made him incomparably the most impressive figure of his time in whatever Court of Law he happened to be. He was one of the best

cross-examiners I have ever heard. I remember one case in which his art was conspicuously displayed. Sir John was counsel for the plaintiff in an action in which the widow of a man who had been killed by the falling of a wall, sued the Railway Company on whose premises the wall stood, for damages, on the ground that the accident was due to their negligence in not seeing that the wall was in a safe condition. The Company's architect was called for the defence, and he swore that the wall had been most carefully constructed, of the very best materials, by the best workman available and duly inspected by himself: that there was no scamping nor haste in the construction: that, in fact, if ever there was a solid and durable wall built, it was this one. So confident and emphatic was this witness in his assertions that Karslake felt that there was no shaking him—his evidence seemed as firm as the wall he had described.

Sir John rose to cross-examine. He simply repeated every question that had been asked in the examination-in-chief: to every question the witness emphatically gave an affirmative, the material, the workmanship, the supervision had all been perfect. Then, closing his eyes languidly, "Handsome Jack" quietly said:—

"Walls carefully built don't usually fall, do they?"

"Certainly not," replied the witness promptly.

"Then, how do you account for this wall falling?"

The witness stared, got very red in the face and was silent, fairly flabbergasted. His artful cross-examiner had impaled him on the horns of a dilemma. He had no answer ready. Sir John sat down. The witness left the box discomfited and the jury found a verdict for the plaintiff.

I think, perhaps, Sergeant Ballantine was the subtlest cross-examiner of my time. There was something so innocent and simple in his questions that the questionee was completely put off his guard, and his manner was so bland, courteous, pleasant and inoffensive that it was difficult for a witness to believe that there could be any

hostile intent on the part of his questioner. He drew out of his victim insensibly and craftily all that he wanted to know, and the poor creature was dumbfounded subsqeuently to find what a clever web his cross-examiner had woven out of his apparently harmless admissions.

His rival, Serjeant Parry, too, though of quite a different type, was often very effective in cross-examination. I remember a case in which he was leader for the defence, and Huddleston, Q.C., was for the plaintiff. Huddleston was in a very bad temper that day (as was often the case with him), he was suffering much pain from an inflamed eye over which he wore a green shade. He had examined one of his own witnesses, a rather nervous old lady, so harshly and irritably that she was reduced almost to tears. If her own counsel could treat her so unhandsomely, what must she expect from the opposing advocate? That was evidently what was in her mind when Serjeant Parry rose to cross-examine. There was a look of terror on her face which was pathetic. Parry was a large man, with a bluff, genial face, who knew when to be severe and when to be gentle. In putting his first question his voice was soft and his tone friendly.

"Pray, compose yourself, my good lady. Be assured that I have no wish to hurry or distress you. You are, no doubt, unaccustomed to the publicity of a court of law, and are naturally nervous in the presence of so many strangers. All I ask you is kindly to answer my questions as simply and directly as possible, and take your time over it."

It was delightful to see the smile that came over the old lady's face. One could feel that she was saying to herself, "What a nice, kind gentleman this is, to be sure! It is quite a pleasure to hear him talk to me."

And Parry simply did as he pleased with that old lady. Indeed, he had hardly any need to ask her questions, for she was ready to pour out all she knew

with a loquacity which made Huddleston grind his teeth and look as if he would have liked to strangle her. The whole Court, the learned Judge included, thoroughly enjoyed the humour of the situation.

Sir Charles Russell was a fine cross-examiner, but I should say that he was not the equal in tact of the three I have named. He was keen and searching, rather than subtle in his questions; but there was a certain kind of witness whom he was admirably qualified to deal with, such as Richard Piggott in the Parnell case. His methods were often, as in that instance, startling and dramatic. I remember his cross-examination of Charles Wood, when that eminent jockey brought his action for libel against Mr. Bingham-Cox, the eccentric proprietor of the *Licensed Victualler's Gazette*. Wood had been accused in the defendant's paper of pulling a horse with deliberate intent to prevent its winning, and Sir Charles, who was for the defendant, handled him mercilessly in the witness-box. No one in Court would have cared to pass through such an ordeal as Wood had to endure, and the contemptuous award of a farthing damages was a tribute to the great advocate's powers as a cross-examiner.

But there is another and a very different type of cross-examiner, now happily less frequently met with than in my early days, the browbeating Old Bailey bully whose sole idea of cross-examining is to hector and terrify the witness whom he is handling. To my thinking this type of cross-examiner is a disgrace to his profession—a loathsome legal reptile. In listening to cross-examination of witnesses, I have often wondered that men of spirit should have submitted to the cowardly insults inflicted on them by cross-examining counsel—cowardly, for none but a coward would strike the defenceless—and who so helpless and defenceless as the wretched witness under cross-examination? But I suppose there is something awe-inspiring about a Court of Justice to the ordinary lay mind, and the bravest

man feels as tame and timorous in the witness-box as a landsman in a storm at sea. Whilst, however, I could account for the witness not having the presence of mind to resent, as he would have done under any other circumstances, the insolence of his cross-examiner, there was another thing which I could *not* account for, and that was the silence and supineness of the Judge who could allow such flagrant and dastardly abuse of the deadly weapon of cross-examination to pass without a stern judicial protest. Once, however, I heard an advocate of this type get a " wigging " from the Bench which he richly deserved. I was in Bow Street Police Court when a case of assault came on. The prosecutor was an elderly gentleman, who had resented the defendant's rudeness to some ladies at the Civil Service Stores, and had been violently assaulted in consequence. The solicitor for the defence began to cross-examine the prosecutor in a manner which Sir John Bridge, the presiding Magistrate, emphatically denounced as " absolutely and disgracefully wrong." Whereupon the solicitor, who was not deficient in the Cockney impudence which a certain class of advocate deems essential to the part, retorted :

" Lord Brougham lays it down that an advocate in charge of a case has only one man to consider, and that is his client."

Whereupon down upon him came Sir John with the crushing rejoinder :

" And Lord Chief Justice Cockburn has laid it down that counsel should use cross-examination as the sword of the warrior, not as the dagger of the assassin. *You* are using it as the dagger of the assassin."

There is nothing more delightful to me than to hear a cross-examiner get a Roland for his Oliver. Here are one or two instances which have come under my own observation.

A learned counsel of my early days at the Bar prided himself on the juvenility of his appearance, and boasted

that he looked twenty years younger than he was. He was cross-examining a very prepossessing and uncommonly self-possessed young woman as to the age of a person whom she knew quite well, but could get no satisfactory answer.

"Well," he persisted, "but surely you must have been able to make a good guess at his age, having seen him so often."

"People don't always look their age."

"No, but you can generally form a good idea from their looks. Now, how old should you say *I* am?"

"You might be sixty by your looks, but judging by the questions you ask I should say about sixteen."

Only his brethren of the Bar knew how poignantly that thrust went home.

I have in my mind a vivid picture of another scene. The witness was a particularly stolid, obstinate farmer of the small tenant class; the cross examining counsel was one of the blatant and blustering bullies I have just animadverted upon.

"Now, sir," quoth the bully in his fiercest tones "attend to me. Is this your handwriting?"

"Noa, it ben't."

"Remember you are on your oath, sir. Do you swear it is not your handwriting."

"Yus," said the witness stubbornly.

"Does it at all resemble your handwriting?"

"Noa, I can't say as it do."

"Now, sir, no prevarication. I won't be trifled with. Does this resemble your handwriting?"

"I can't say."

"But you *must* say, sir. Will you take your solemn oath that this writing does not resemble yours?"

"I know it don't."

"Oh! you know, do you? Well, just tell the jury *how* you know."

"Cause I can't write."

I have no doubt that some of my older legal readers

will remember a barrister, remarkable for his fiery red hair, which stood up in an aggressive brush on his singularly large head. He was a notable Old Bailey practitioner, with a voice of thunder, and was notorious for the terrific aspect he assumed when cross-examining a witness. He was prosecuting counsel on one occasion in a case of bigamy, and had to cross-examine a witness who was apparently honest and truthful, but who squinted most horribly.

The red-haired barrister was irritated at being unable to shake the witness's evidence, and at last in his most thunderous tones, said :—

"Be careful, sir, you are on your oath. Be very careful how you reply to my question. I was taught, sir, by my father to be always on my guard in dealing with a man who squints."

With an innocent unperturbed expression, the witness replied :—

"That's funny! my mother warned me just the same about folks with red hair."

I recall another case in which Counsel was made to look very foolish in Court, though I am bound to say it was not his fault. The defendant in an assault case was understood to have urged in extenuation of his having taken the law into his own hands, that the language of the prosecutor was of such a character that no gentleman with an atom of self-respect could possibly have refrained from resenting it. This was at any rate, the plea put forward by his counsel, who in cross-examining the plaintiff said :—

"Now, sir, tell the jury what you said to the defendant to provoke him into striking you."

Up jumped the prosecutor's counsel and objected to the question being put, on the legal ground that no man can be compelled to make any admission which may incriminate himself. There was a hot argument which lasted half-an-hour. Then the Judge said that

as it was now the luncheon hour, he would reserve his decision till his return from lunch.

During the interval his lordship discussed the point with a brother Judge sitting in the next Court. On his return counsel were eager to learn his decision.

"I have consulted with my learned brother," said the Judge, "and he agrees with me that the question may be put."

With a triumphant glance at his discomfited rival, the defendant's counsel, shifting his wig slightly to one side, and crossing his hands behind him, asked with the assurance of one who has gained his point:

"Now, sir, what was it you said to the defendant?"

"I said nothing at all: he knocked me down before I could open my mouth."

Per contra I have often heard witnesses give themselves away ludicrously by their replies to counsel. I recollect an amusing instance at the Cambridge Assizes. A good-looking nurse-maid in her examination-in-chief was asked what her occupation was; she said in a very superior tone:

"I take charge of infants."

Counsel on the other side when he rose to cross-examine, began by saying:

"You have told my learned friend that you take charge of infants. By infants do you mean Undergraduates of the University under the age of twenty-one?"

The roar of laughter which followed, so confused and angered the witness that she was easily led into contradictions which rendered her evidence worthless.

Among the many Judges whom I have seen and heard, I give first place to Lord Chief Justice Cockburn. He not only possessed a natural dignity and a fine clear cut face which enabled him to look the part to perfection, but his silver voice and his command of finished English rendered it a high intellectual treat to listen to him. The first summing-up of his I heard, left an ineffaceable

impression on me. It was in the great Overend and Gurney case when, after the smash of that famous firm, the partners were charged with conspiracy to defraud the public. Cockburn could never quite sink the advocate in the judge nor lose an opportunity for an eloquent homily. On this occasion he concluded his charge to the jury with a most impressive and eloquent peroration on the decay of commercial morality in London. It was hardly, perhaps, within the province of a judge, but no one who heard it, I am sure, failed to be deeply affected by it. In the gloom of the dimly lighted Court—it was an afternoon in December—those silver accents from the Bench, picturing the London merchant of the past with his unsullied honour and probity—and contrasting him with his degenerate successors, as revealed in the evidence adduced in this case, was profoundly moving, and I have never known such a solemn stillness in Court, as there was during that memorable summing-up.

Another notable summing-up of Cockburn's was in the Wainwright murder case. Henry Wainwright, a man of considerable intelligence and some literary attainments, was charged with murdering his mistress, Harriet Lane. He had shot her and buried her body in his house. For months it had lain there, no one knew or apparently cared what had become of her. Her disappearance excited no comment. But Wainwright's lease of the house was near its expiration, and it became necessary to remove the remains. He had taken a lease of some cellars in the City for the purpose of his business (he was a wholesale brush-maker), and there he resolved to bury the body of Harriet Lane with the certainty that it would never be discovered. And it probably never would have been discovered, but for an incredible piece of carelessness, or recklessness, on Wainwright's part. The remains were packed up in a parcel of American cloth. Wainwright brought the package out into the street and told his foreman, Alfred

Stokes, to keep an eye upon it, whilst he went to fetch a four-wheeler. Whilst Stokes stood beside the parcel waiting, he heard, so he swore in the witness-box, a voice say distinctly, " Alfred Stokes, open that parcel." He could not tell where the voice came from ; there was not a human being within ear-shot. Thrice the mysterious voice repeated its command. Terrified out of his wits, Stokes at last tremblingly loosened the string, and opened a corner of the parcel. To his horror he saw a human hand. Hastily closing up the package, he controlled himself by a desperate effort, and when his master came back with the four-wheeler, he noticed no signs of agitation in his foreman. Stokes immediately informed the police of what he had seen, and in due course Wainwright was arrested for murder. I have never listened to anything so dramatic and absorbing as Cockburn's reconstruction of the crime in his summing up. It was uncanny in its realism. One could hardly believe that the man who was, in his calm, exquisitely modulated voice, giving this thrilling description, had not actually witnessed the scene he described. Wainwright seemed to think so. I have never forgotten his face whilst Cockburn was conjuring up the ghost of his crime. It was white and strained. You could see the clammy moisture on his forehead as, with eyes rivetted on the Judge, he leaned eagerly forward, drinking in every word with agonized intensity. It was absolutely painful to watch his visible emotion. Of course the judge also gave full weight to the prisoner's statement, sifted and criticised the evidence, pointed out what told in favour of the prisoner, and what against him. But the prevailing impression on most persons in Court—certainly on myself—was that by a fine effort of imagination, the Judge had described the murder almost exactly as it had happened.

Wainwright was convicted, sentenced and executed. A considerable number of persons were admitted to the execution by orders from the sheriffs. An old friend

and brother-journalist of mine, now a Member of Parliament, and one of the most brilliant and successful journalists living, was present, as special reporter for an evening paper. I met him later in the day, and found him in an extraordinary state of nervous excitement. He said to me: "I did not think that the sight of a man being hanged could have affected me so much. But you have no idea what my sensations were when I saw Wainwright come pinioned on to the scaffold; his face was a yellowish white, like wax, but he was otherwise as cool and composed and as utterly devoid of fear as you could imagine a man to be. Indeed among all the persons there, he was apparently the most calm and self-controlled. He looked round upon us all with a glance of infinite scorn, then, with a contemptuous movement of his head, muttered, 'Come to see a man die, have you, you curs!' And, villain though he was, he did die like a man, and I have felt sick and mean and ashamed of myself ever since."

But my friend was mistaken in supposing that I had no idea what his sensations were. I had a very vivid idea, for I had undergone them myself when I saw Michael Barrett, the chief actor in the Clerkenwell explosion, hanged in front of Newgate. It was, as I have already said, the last public execution in this country. I was then a student at the Temple, and was dragged from my bed the very small hours of the morning by two or three fellow-Templars to come, like my Lord Tomnoddy, "to see a man die in his shoes." I was not keen on witnessing the gruesome spectacle, but I went. We were early on the scene, and by vigorous struggling forced our way to a place close to the scaffold. Long before the clock of St. Sepulchre's chimed the fatal hour, an enormous crowd had assembled, but it was not nearly as ribald and brutal a crowd as I had been led to expect. I was interested in watching the faces around me, and was not conscious of any feeling of solemnity till Barrett appeared on the

scaffold. I could see his head and shoulders, and I noticed the swift, half-terrified glance he shot at the crowd, whose hoots and execrations assailed his ears, but in an instant his eyes were turned again to the priest by his side, upon whose parting words of consolation his whole attention seemed fixed. The yells and insults of the mob suddenly died away into silence, as the executioner drew the white cap over the convict's face. I was fascinated—I felt as if I could hardly breathe, I was trying to realize what the man's feelings must be, and when the drop fell with a dull thud, I experienced a sensation such as I have never experienced before or since. I cannot describe it. I can only say that a horrible nausea seemed to overcome me. I turned to my companions and from their white faces and scared eyes, I guessed that their feelings must, in some degree, resemble mine. There is something appalling to the imagination in the sudden, abrupt exit from life of a fellow-creature as robust and strong and full-blooded as oneself. I silently led the way to the "Daniel Lambert" Tavern at the corner of Newgate Street, and ordered sixpenny-worths of brandy all round. We all drank the spirit off neat at a gulp, without a word, and I don't think the silence was broken till we reached the Temple.

Another strong Judge whose vigorous methods delighted me was Mr. Justice Day. I happened once to be in Liverpool when the Assizes were on, and was in Court during the trial of three members of a notorious gang of ruffians, who went by the name, if I remember rightly, of "Corner-men." These scoundrels were the terror of the town, and the outrages they committed were of the most dastardly and cruel kind—their victims being mostly drunken sailors about the docks whom they robbed and half-killed. The three were all convicted of robbery with violence. I cannot remember their names, but I will call them Brown, Jones and Robinson. In passing sentence, Justice Day said—as

far as I can recollect, I do not, of course pretend to give his *ipsissima verba* :

" I am not one of those who believe in long terms of imprisonment in such cases. It is not fair to the rate-payers that they should have to support infamous criminals for years in gaol. Therefore I sentence you, Brown, to nine months imprisonment with hard labour, and you Jones and Robinson to six months each with hard labour."

The prisoners could hardly believe their ears—they had expected at least treble the amount of punishment. Here was a soft-hearted beak indeed ! Their relief and joy were visible in their faces, whilst amazement and indignation were the prevailing sentiments of the public in Court. But Mr. Justice Day had not *quite* done with the prisoners yet. He paused for a moment to give full effect to the words which were to follow ; then he added, with a note of grim humour in his voice :

" As an additional punishment you will each be flogged three times during your term of imprisonment. You will each receive twenty-five lashes the week after you enter gaol, a further twenty-five when half your sentence has expired, and a final twenty-five the week before you are discharged from prison."

You should have seen the horror-stricken look that came over the faces of those three ruffians—then simultaneously there burst from them a howl of anguish, followed by a frantic appeal for mercy. But the Judge, regarding them with stony indifference, simply motioned the warders to remove the prisoners. They struggled, they kicked, they screamed curses at the Judge, until they were overpowered and conveyed to the cells. The loathsome cowards did not mind what pain they inflicted on their victims, but the thought of having the same measure meted out to themselves, of having to submit their own tender skins to the lash, filled them with abject terror. The effect of these sentences was extraordinary. The stern and wholesome severity of

Mr. Justice Day stamped out that gang of ruffians at once. No more was heard of the "Corner Men." I most heartily wish that there were a few more such judges on the Bench, not afraid to avail themselves of the lash as a deterrent punishment, and recognising the fact that there is a certain class of brutalized criminals who are impervious to every kind of punishment but that which inflicts physical pain. How can the lash brutalize those who are brutes already, and can only be made to feel as brutes are made to feel?

No one who saw either Cockburn or Day only on the Bench would ever have credited them with levity of conduct or anything that savoured of the indecorous. Yet both of them could indulge in eccentricities which would have shocked Mrs. Grundy had they come to that prudish lady's ears. There are people in Ramsgate who tell very queer stories of Cockburn, when he used to come there in his yacht, and visit his brother judge, Mellor, who lived at a few miles' distance. To Bohemians like myself, such stories did not detract from the respect and admiration felt for the Judge, but I have too much reverence for the Lord Chief Justice's memory to repeat idle gossip which might seem in the eyes of the Philistines to besmirch his fame.

Mr. Justice Day's eccentricities were of a blameless kind, though the last things one would have associated with his grave spectacled visage. When he was leader of the Midland Circuit, he would frequently sally forth at midnight at the head of a band of frolicsome juniors, and indulge in a madcap foot steeplechase across country, leaping hedges and ditches, often sounding the depths of the latter, and returning "breathless and besprent with mire" in the small hours of the morning. There were doubts whether Day ever went to bed—he was certainly up and about again at a very early hour, apparently as fresh as paint after his nocturnal escapade, and no one who saw his serious demeanour in Court when conducting some important case would have

deemed him capable of such boyish freaks as he had recently been engaged in. But if you scanned his face closely you could see the gleam of humour in his eyes and in the curve of his lips, and you could guess that there was still a boy's love of fun in the heart of him, for all his elderly gravity of deportment.

The jokes of judges I am afraid to venture upon recording, lest I should be accused of foisting chestnuts on the reader, and, besides, many of them would only be understood by the legal mind. I remember one, however, which I have never seen in print, and it was remarkable as coming from a judge who was seldom known to say a good thing. Vice-Chancellor Malins had not a very high reputation as a judge—his judgments were frequently over-ruled, and he was too often dominated by the masterful personality of Glasse, Q.C., who was leader in his court. But he made one good joke at any rate. In the next court sat Vice-Chancellor Bacon, who lived to a very great age, and was one of the most popular and able of Chancery Judges. On one occasion an elderly lady, who had been a litigant in Malins's Court was so exasperated at his giving judgment against her that she put her hand in a bag which she carried, drew out an egg and hurled it with all her force at the Judge. It just missed his head and broke on the back of his seat. Without moving a muscle, Malins quietly remarked:

"I think that must have been intended for my brother Bacon."

There were many stories told of Lord Chancellor Westbury whom I can just remember. When he was at the Bar there was not a more ferociously overbearing "leader" than Bethell, as he then was. He was the terror of "juniors," whom he used to bully with unpardonable insolence. On two occasions he carried his insults so far that the outraged "juniors" waited for him outside the doors and inflicted summary personal chastisement upon the "leader," who was no

longer protected by the sanctity of the Court. Even the Bench was not wholly proof against his domineering spirit. The influence which he acquired over Vice-Chancellor Shadwell was so great that a witty stuff-gownsman propounded a riddle which became a popular one at the Bar: "Why is Shadwell like King Jeroboam?" "Because he has set up an idol in Bethel."

Westbury was a virulent enemy of the famous Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop, first of Oxford and then of Winchester, and by a strange coincidence they both died in the same week, Westbury quietly in his bed—the Bishop, killed by a fall from his horse. It was Westbury who gave, or at least suggested, the nickname by which Wilberforce was invariably known. They were bitter political adversaries, and there were constant passages of arms between them in the House of Lords. It was on the occasion of one of these encounters, when Westbury attacked the Bishop about the Judgment of Convocation in the famous "Essays and Reviews" case, that the Lord Chancellor made a pungent allusion to his ecclesiastical opponent's style as "eel-like, oily and saponaceous." "Punch" promptly seized upon the idea conveyed in the last of these epithets and conferred upon the Bishop the sobriquet of "Soapy Sam," which Society accepted as so happy an alliterative designation that it stuck to the Prelate ever afterwards.

Asked once by an inquisitive and somewhat impertinent lady why he was called "Soapy Sam," the Bishop blandly replied that he supposed it was because he came out of every matter in which he was engaged with clean hands—an explanation more ingenious than convincing.

But Judges have not only been witty themselves, they have been the cause of wit in others. When Serjeant Shee and Mr. Lush, Q.C., were raised to the Bench, the usual banquet was given them by the Bar, and there is a tradition that the leader, on whom the task of

proposing the toast in their honour devolved, expressed himself thus :

" There is one time-honoured toast to which both Bench and Bar have always done justice. It is " Wine and Women." It is virtually that toast, gentlemen, that I now ask you to drink with the enthusiasm which it deserves. But I shall on this occasion word it somewhat differently—to-night, in honour of our distinguished guests, I give it to you as *Lush and Shee.*"

When Lord Penzance, long President of the Divorce Court, was appointed the first Judge of the new Court, established by " The Public Worship Regulation Act," on the nomination of the two Archbishops, Tait and Thompson, the witty Bowen, then " Attorney-General's Devil," afterwards Lord Justice, knocked off in Court the following impromptu epigram :—

An Omen.

Penzance by Thompson named and Tait
To bind together Church and State
With worship regulation,
Accustomed only to divorce
Will bring about in speedy course
Judicial separation.

It was the careless and unaccountable blunder of an Irish Judge which provoked one of the cleverest impromptu *jeux d'esprits* I ever heard. A Miss A. had been brought up before the Court of Queen's Bench in Dublin for refusing to deliver up her sister's child to its father. Miss A. was a bigoted Protestant—her brother-in-law was a Roman Catholic. She maintained that it was the dead mother's wish that the child should be trained in the Protestant faith, and to further that wish she had carried off the child and concealed it. The Court ordered her to produce the child. She refused ; whereupon she was committed to prison for six months without hard labour. By a stupid blunder the order of committal was made out to the Governor of Mountjoy

Prison, which is, or was, a prison exclusively for males, and over the gates of which are carved in large letters the words: "Cease to do evil and learn to do well." When the lady was brought to Mountjoy Prison, she was of course, as a female, refused admission and the sheriff had to accommodate her in his own house for the night. The next day she was brought again before the Court of Queen's Bench to have the order amended and another gaol named. One of the most brilliant men then at the Irish Bar, Keys, Q.C., thereupon scribbled the following impromptu, which was passed round from Bar to Bench and equally appreciated by both:

"In most earthly tribunals some hardship prevails,
But the Court of Queen's Bench is both prudent and mild,
It committed Miss A. to a prison for males,
As the very best way of 'producing a child.'
How she'll do it——it passes 'conception' to tell
If she 'Cease to do evil and learn to do well.'
But if, in six months, 'without labour' confined,
She produces a child, 'twill astonish mankind."

VI

Humours of the Platform

For five and twenty years I lectured all over the kingdom from Penzance to Aberdeen, and during that time I visited upwards of three hundred towns great and small. I may lay claim, therefore, to some knowledge of the platform and its humours.

I daresay that nowadays it may seem an odd calling to have adopted, and when I adopted it, as a subsidiary source of income to journalism, I had to endure from candid friends sarcastic references to "the itinerant chin wagger." But as my "orations" were on literary and historical subjects and were moreover successful and profitable, I bore these sarcasms with unruffled serenity and never repented of having "gone on the stump."

From the time when I was a boy in my early teens the platform had a fascination for me and the wizard who threw a glamour over it was Thomas Edward Brown, whose genius as a poet the world is slowly recognising. But no one then suspected him of the poet's frenzy. His picturesque and piquant prose, as displayed in his sermons and lectures, was what filled us with delight and admiration. And indeed I should like to see a collection of his prose pieces—his "Walks in Manxland" —his causeries contributed to "The New Review" what time W. E. Henley ruled its destinies—for, as all who have read his "Letters" will admit, T. E. B. was an admirable writer of vigorous, pungent prose, with a style refreshingly characteristic and original.

In the little dingy Grammar School of Castletown, Isle of Man—the imposing Town Hall as yet was not,

and it was the largest room the capitul of Man then boasted—fit audience if few gathered to listen to T. E. B.'s remarkable and stirring lectures. He was then a young man with all the blushing honours of his brilliant Oxford career thick upon him and he brought the fine audacity of youth into his historical portraits—Raleigh, Drake, Simon de Montford, Laud—with a wealth of imaginative description that should have warned us of the possibilities of the future poet. But they did not. I listened with all the ardour of hero-worshipping boyhood to these brilliant discourses and they fired me with the ambition to emulate them so far as my powers would let me. In after days T. E. B. thought scornfully of his early platform triumphs. In a letter I had from him previous to a lecturing visit to Bristol, he wrote :

" I confess your reference to my old sins in that way gave me rather a cold shudder. The ' oration ' has long faded out of my life. I am not, perhaps, a very bad hand at a ' talk ' to a congenial audience, but for set oratory—no ! I can make nothing of it. John Chrystal, Auctioneer, of Ramsay, almost frightened me out of my senses some time ago at Kirk Andreas—' Aw bless mee sowl ! I remember—I remember—Rallee, aye, Rallee—aw splendid ! such fire, such geni——' Archdeacon interrupting, ' Yis, yis, yis,' fusses about impatient. John stands firm with the hard auctioneer smile on his face, says no more, but looks as who should say :— ' All right ! you can have it, you know, if you want it.' Then Chrystal and the Archdeacon's auction—auction of cattle and farm implements, a thousand quips about a saddle and quirks, about a harrow and the old Arch's funny old rueful look ! And John returning to the charge at intervals, ' Bless me sowl, though, yandthar (yonder) Rallee ! aw dear ! aw dear ! ' "

I confess that honest John's sentiments tallied with my own, " yandthar Rallee " still looms in misty magnificence through the long vista of the past, and I

seem still to hear the faint echoes of that clear ringing voice which had the call of a clarion in its notes.

It was in that dark and humble little Grammar School that I was first stirred by the eloquence of the spoken word. I don't think that my ambition soared so high as to contemplate following, at however remote a distance, the master whom I reverenced as a disciple. At any rate it was not the influence of T. E. B. that led me immediately to take up lecturing on my own account. I should never have thought of doing so if my friend Lawrence Gane—himself a very popular and capable public lecturer, before the Bar and the House of Commons absorbed all his time—had not worried me to give a lecture for a Literary Institute of which he was President. I declined at first—but he would not be denied.

"Clarke" (the present Sir Edward), he said, "gave us a first-rate lecture on Marlborough last session—*you* must give us one next session."

I consented, and, being then saturated with study of Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic," I chose William the Silent as my subject. Three four-wheelers, laden with critical and somewhat scornful Templars, escorted me to Holloway, and the presence of these censors was not calculated to allay my nervousness. However, I came successfully out of the ordeal, and Gane urged me to take up lecturing professionally, which I eventually did.

I realised then that I had all along had a hankering for the platform which had been almost unconsciously fostered by listening to some of the greatest platform orators of the day—Canon Hugh Stowell, William Morley Punshon, Hugh Stowell Brown (brother of T. E. B.), Henry Vincent, the Chartist and others.

I was further stimulated by a passage in the introduction to a series of lectures by well-known men, delivered under the auspices of the Rev. J. Hampden Gurney, of Marylebone, and published under the title of "Evening Recreations." Mr. Gurney in his preface gave a glowing

account of the honours and rewards which fell to the share of the public lecturer in America ; he stated that he knew men of position and education in the States who were making a regular and certain income of £1,000 a year, and he hoped the day would come when, in England, University men would consider it no slur upon their dignity to adopt lecturing as a profession and would find it as lucrative an avocation as it was on the other side of the Atlantic.

I may say in passing that Mr. Gurney's hopes have never been fulfilled. There are indeed plenty of clever young Oxford and Cambridge men who lecture in connection with the University Extension scheme, but I fancy that they do not find that much fame or profit accrues to them thereby. These, however, are not public lecturers of the type to which Mr. Gurney referred. That sort has never really " caught on " in this country, and with the exception of Sir Robert Ball, I don't think any professional lecturer here has ever made an average income of £1,000 a year, or even half that sum, over a period, say, of twenty years.

When I started on my career as a public lecturer there was a slump in the business just setting in. The palmy days of the lecturer—when the movement set on foot by Lord Brougham for the establishment of Mechanics' Institutes, Working Men's Clubs, and Societies for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, was at its height—were over, and there was no longer the same keen demand for the fluent and popular expositor of History and Science—nor the same appreciation of platform oratory. Popular taste has gone miles away from its old land marks. It seems incredible to the present generation that their forbears should have been able to listen to any talker, however eloquent, for a couple of hours without being bored. Nevertheless it is a fact that people then were so constituted that they deemed it a high form of entertainment to hear a vivacious, spirited and dramatic " oration."

I think that the greatest platform orator I ever heard was Canon Hugh Stowell. I leave political orators out of the question. Canon Stowell had an exuberant flow of spontaneous natural eloquence. He was a man of commanding presence, with a face that kindled and an eye that flashed. But he would often commence in such an affected style that one longed to throw things at him—for five minutes perhaps, he would set one's teeth on edge by his mincing, oily intonation—then, suddenly he would throw off the affectation and from that moment he had his audience in the hollow of his hand. In those exciting days when the ecclesiastical world was torn and rent over the discussion on Puseyism and "Essays and Reviews," Canon Stowell sometimes spoke for *several hours* and held his hearers enthralled! There was one great meeting at Manchester at which he spoke for, I think four hours, and wound up with a very happy point which roused the huge audience to the wildest enthusiasm. On one side of him sat the Bishop of Chester, on the other Lord Derby (the Rupert of Debate). Stowell was urging the Bishops in their charges to their clergy and statesmen in their political addresses, to hammer away unceasingly in their advocacy of the Protestantism of the Church of England. Let both do their duty and victory would be assured. Then, raising his voice in trumpet tones and with a fine, dramatic gesture which included first the Bishop, then Lord Derby, he cried: "Be our battle cry then that of Marmion:

"'*Charge,* Chester, *Charge!* On, *Stanley,* on!'"

A vigorous, picturesque and eloquent oration of his at Exeter Hall on "Queen Elizabeth" also lingers in my memory. He was one of the Giants of the Platform, and has left none like him.

William Morley Punshon, the great Wesleyan orator of the pulpit and platform, had none of Stowell's natural gift of eloquence. His speeches and lectures were carefully committed to memory, but he reeled them off

with such force and fire that their effect was almost as great as that of Stowell's. His voice was harsh and unmusical, but one forgot that in the impassioned earnestness of his declamation. I suppose Exeter Hall seldom, if ever, witnessed such a scene as that which followed the peroration of his lecture on John Bunyan. The whole audience rose to their feet; men shouted themselves hoarse; women waved their handkerchiefs in a wild outburst of hysterical emotion. His oration on "Macaulay," delivered immediately after the death of the great Whig Essayist and Annalist, was the finest thing of its kind I ever heard. The man carried you along with him, willy-nilly, by the irresistible swing of his rhetoric. Read in cold blood, one could detect bombast, fustian, rhodomontade, in the style, but one did not notice these defects when one was listening to the impassioned delivery. Punshon's orations were undoubtedly marvellous feats of elocution and memory.

And so were Mason Jones's four famous orations on "Moses," "Elijah," "Job," and "St. Paul," delivered at St. James' Hall on Sunday afternoons. Artificial and declamatory to the last degree—they were nevertheless rendered attractive by the personality of the man, and the Irish enthusiasm that warmed his utterance. His oration on "St. Paul" was a particularly striking one. I remember its impressive opening, the first stanza of Cowper's immortal hymn:

> "God moves in a *mysterious* way
> His wonders to perform."

The expression he put into that long-drawn "mysterious" was wonderful; and equally well do I remember the really magnificent elocution with which he declaimed, as his peroration, the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians—which forms so impressive a feature in the noble Burial Service of the Church of England.

Another notable giant of the platform was Hugh

Stowell Brown, the famous Baptist minister of Myrtle Street Chapel, Liverpool. Hugh Stowell Brown had a fine, breezy style of humour which the others lacked. His Sunday afternoon talks to men at St. George's Hall, Liverpool, were of the raciest, most pungent style of homely eloquence. Their titles, too, were startling and arresting. "Napoleon's Book of Fate," "The Devil's Pay-book," "Five Shillings and Costs." He was a burly, rough-hewn man, with a powerful, penetrating voice—the voice of one who meant to be heard and listened to. His great oration on "The Battle of Life" was a fine, manly, vigorous deliverance—irradiated with humour and ringing with satire. He had a way of emphasising his satire and invective with jerks of his huge shoulders which if not always graceful were undoubtedly effective and suggestive. Two lectures on "Hogarth and His Pictures" which he delivered in Exeter Hall (afterwards published) were admirable—bold, racy, caustic, pungent—breathing the very spirit and humour of Hogarth.

But the platform orators I have named, although, with the exception of Canon Stowell, they took big fees, did not come within the category of professional lecturers. It was only very large Societies and Institutions that could afford to engage them. Among the regular professionals who catered for the host of smaller institutes, when I joined their ranks—two stood out prominently. George Dawson and George Grossmith, the father of the popular Savoyard. They were the two *pièces de résistance* on as many of the programmes as they could find time to engage themselves for. I suppose each had from a hundred to a hundred and twenty engagements in a season, from October to April. But they took very small fees. When on tour, both were quite content to accept four guineas per lecture from small institutes and they rarely charged more than five. I found that whenever I named a higher fee I had the names of these celebrities flung in my face and was asked

if I thought myself superior to them, that I should demand five guineas when they were content with four. Of course I had in many cases to submit to their tariff. But five consecutive evenings at places within short distances of one another were worth taking at even that price. And then one could usually sandwich in one or two big places at seven or ten guineas apiece.

George Dawson, the idol of Birmingham, was the philosopher of the platform and one of the most delightful talkers I ever listened to. Hypercritical critics sneered at him as only Carlyle or Emerson and water. But he was far more than that, he was an original thinker as well as an interpreter of the thoughts of those two philosophers with whom he was so largely in sympathy. He had a peculiar, racy, half-humorous, half-satirical style of his own, and leaning his arms on the desk he talked colloquially. "Luther," "Drake," "Bunyan," "Don Quixote" were talks of his so wise and luminous and witty that I have never forgotten them, and I can see vividly as I recall them, his fine head, with the curly, grizzled hair and beard, and the big, powerful frame of him as he lounged negligently over his desk and took the audience into his confidence. And over a pipe and stimulating glass afterwards he was equally fascinating. A true *man* was George Dawson—the very essence of virility.

George Grossmith was as different from him of Birmingham as chalk from cheese. If Dawson were the philosopher, Grossmith was the humorist of the platform. He was an admirable mimic. His "Lecture on Lecturers" was the best piece of sustained mimicry I ever heard. His bald head, clean-shaven face and mobile features were a sort of blend of Pickwick and the famous Sandy Russel of the "Scotsman." You expected humour from a man with such a face and you got it. He had a pleasant voice and such an easy, agreeable, fluent style of speech that he made the minutes speed away with extraordinary swiftness.

One might say of him with a slight perversion of Milton's meaning, " With thee discoursing I forget all time."

Henry Vincent, the once celebrated Chartist orator, " the Lion of the platform," I heard twice. The first time was at Lowestoft, in 1858, when he was still in his prime. His subject was " Chartism and the Leaders of Reform." He spoke with splendid force and fire and his sketches of Brougham and other great reformers were picturesque, graphic, and brilliant. He paced the entire length of the platform as he spoke, like a restless lion in its cage, and there was something leonine in his look—the massive, finely shaped head, the flowing beard, the flashing eyes. Many years later I went, with my friend Lawrence Gane, to hear him at the Birkbeck Institution. The subject was Milton. It was a melancholy disillusionment. The lion was old, tame and toothless. All the fire was gone and, to raise a laugh, he was rĕduced to the banality of imitating with smack of mumbling lips the attempts of Milton to kiss his successive wives ! What a falling off was here my countrymen !

When I first went a-lecturing it was the custom for some resident in the place to entertain the lecturer. And I have a lively recollection of many delightful hosts and hostesses who made my brief visits really delightful experiences. But after a while these courtesies of hospitality were dropped and the lecturer was relegated to the hotel to fend for himself. Some of my experiences of country inns have been doleful in the extreme. The coffee-room had probably not been used since the summer, the hastily lit fire smoked—the lights were dim—the bedroom stuffy—the solitude dreary and depressing. I had a remedy, however, for the last of these ills. I used to send my card to the Commercial Room with a pencilled note to the effect that a forlorn fellow creature was moping himself to death in the coffee room and begged to be allowed to share the genial society of the commercial gentlemen.

I invariably received a hearty invitation to come and make myself at home with them, and I have spent some pleasant evenings with convivial and intelligent bagmen —though I am bound to say that sometimes I had to endure a purgatory of boredom which was perhaps worse than the creepy gloom of the desolate coffee room. Long wearisome railway journeys by day and night—uncertain and hastily bolted meals, rude and inconsiderate secretaries, poor, thin and unsympathetic audiences, halls cold, draughty and depressing, or close and stifling, exasperating chairmen—these were all drawbacks to the pleasures of lecturing.

But, on the other hand, there was the exceeding great joy of addressing a large and sympathetic audience—the glorious feeling of exaltation in the consciousness that one had them in one's power—that one had thrown a magician's spell over them and could sway them as one pleased. That was far more than compensation for all the minor troubles of the lecturer's lot and the memories of such triumphs stir the blood as one recalls them. Those were moments when one realised in some sort the meaning of " a crowded hour of glorious life."

I have referred to exasperating chairmen as one of the lecturer's trials. I have suffered many things at the hands of chairmen. There was the pompous creature who opened the proceedings with a long speech, airing his own views on the subject of the lecture and on things in general whilst the hapless lecturer sat and tried to look blandly resigned at the impatient audience. Sir James Picton, at the Rotunda in Liverpool, once spoke for more than half an hour when introducing me to the audience. In his case, however, there was some excuse—as he had been prevented by illness from delivering the inaugural address with which it was the custom to open the session. But it was rough on the lecturer! Then, there was the chairman who crammed up the subject in the Encyclopædia an hour before the lecture and deemed himself qualified to tell the audience

what the lecturer was going to talk about. The Rev. John Watson ("Ian Maclaren") was a sinner in this respect though his charming personality made one easily forgive him. The ignorant and blundering chairman was pretty trying, but then he tickled one's sense of humour. A Nonconformist minister once took the chair for me when I was lecturing on "William the Silent" and gave an eloquent introductory address on "our immortal William the Third"—whom he confounded with the Father of the Dutch Republic! I have often wondered what must have been the expression on his face when the first sentence I uttered revealed his ignorance.

But I never had to endure such a strain on my risibility as my friend W. E. Church, when lecturing on Charles Lamb, on the Surrey side of the Thames. His chairman was a prosperous butcher in the New Cut and he astonished my friend by announcing his gratification at presiding over a meeting with such a worthy object as that of paying a tribute to the many estimable qualities of their late highly respected neighbour, Mr. Charles Lamb. The unhappy man was under the impression that the subject of the evening's discourse was an eminent brother butcher in the New Cut of that name, who had died about two years previously and left a large fortune!

Occasionally I have been privileged to have particularly appropriate and fitting chairmen.

In 1872 I lectured at the Chelsea Vestry Hall on "Our Empire of the Sea," and my chairman was an old naval captain who had been a midshipman on board the *Victory* at Trafalgar. His name, I think, was Rowsell, but at this distance of time I cannot be sure on that point. He told me that he was standing just behind Nelson when the hero received his mortal wound, that he helped to raise him, and that the sleeve of his jacket was wet with Nelson's blood. This fine old sailor was then eighty-three—he would, therefore, have been

about sixteen at the date of Trafalgar. I have never seen any man of his years so extraordinarily active and vigorous.

On a later occasion, when I delivered the same lecture at Newcastle-on-Tyne, my chairman was a Danish gentleman whose father had fought against Nelson at Copenhagen, and was an officer on the ship which Nelson boarded to demand the surrender of the crippled Danish seventy-four, *Zealand*.

I think the best chairman I ever had was Lord Brassey —whose remarks both before and after the lecture were admirably terse, pithy and pertinent.

I have occasionally been the recipient of ambiguous compliments from chairmen. Once, after I had concluded my lecture in an Essex town, the venerable Rector, came up to me smiling. I expected he was going to say something particularly nice. What he did say was: "Sir, I congratulate you on possessing the finest pair of lungs I ever heard in this hall."

One of the oddest and at the same time one of the most disagreeable experiences I have ever met with as a lecturer, happened to me at a large manufacturing town in the Lowlands of Scotland.

I was the guest of a solicitor in the town, and before lecturing I asked what sort of an audience I might expect. I was told that it would be large—that the *élite* of the neighbourhood would be in the front seats, but that a section of those who filled the back seats I must be prepared to find rough and probably disposed to be noisy.

When I stepped on the platform I found the large hall crowded. I had no difficulty in arresting the attention of the rough and noisy element in the back seats. Indeed, I was agreeably surprised to find that they listened quietly and intelligently to the story I had to tell. But the conduct of "the *élite* of the neighbourhood" in the front seats astounded me.

Before I had been speaking ten minutes I noticed an

ominous restlessness among them. Then, to my amazement, I saw a well-dressed gentleman twist his pocket handkerchief into some grotesque shape and send it with a jerk into the lap of his neighbour. who passed it on to the person next to him, and backwards and forwards it went like a shuttle, amid suppressed laughter and giggling. I was so annoyed and disgusted that I cut my lecture short and left the platform in a rage. The secretary was awaiting me in the committee room with my fee. He said:

"You gave us a shorter lecture than we are accustomed to. But I hope you were pleased with your audience."

I turned upon him in indignation, and replied: "*Pleased!* I would not lecture again to such an audience if you offered me a hundred guineas." Then I curtly wished him "good-night," and left.

When I returned to my host's, and was asked how I liked my audience, I let off the steam of my wrath. I saw meaning glances exchanged between the members of the household, and then my hostess said:

"I'm afraid it is partly our fault. We ought to have told you beforehand that the two front rows are always allotted to the patients from a large lunatic asylum close by. Of course only the harmless patients are allowed to attend. But we were afraid that if we told you beforehand it might have upset you."

Mistaken kindness! If they had only told me I should have been prepared for some eccentricity—as it was, I felt deeply insulted.

The following night I was lecturing at another large town in the Lowlands, and before the lecture began I said to the secretary:

"By the way, what sort of persons generally occupy the front seats at your lectures?"

He looked surprised at the question, and replied, "Well, the best families in the town. I see the party you met at dinner are in the first row."

" Thank you," said I, " I only asked because in some places in Scotland they have a practice of putting the local lunatics in the front seats, and I wanted to be quite sure."

Then I told him the story of the previous night's experience, at which he laughed heartily.

This was an accidental experience of lunatics in the lecture hall, but not long afterwards I lectured before an audience composed entirely of lunatics, with the exception, of course, of the medical superintendents and attendants.

The establishment was a large one, containing, I suppose, some 700 or 800 patients, all handsomely paid for by their relatives. After the experience I had had in Scotland I was rather nervous at facing an audience which I knew to consist almost entirely of lunatics. The hall was a spacious and handsome one. On one side were seated the ladies, and on the other the gentlemen. Most of them were in evening dress, and there was nothing whatever about their appearance or demeanour to indicate that they were not perfectly sane.

I had been speaking about five minutes, when there suddenly burst an ear-piercing yell from a wild-looking lady at the far end of the hall. It startled me more than it did my hearers who were probably used to such sounds. Two female attendants quietly rose and seated themselves one on each side of the excitable lady. But that was her only expression of emotion, it was not repeated, and nothing else occurred to disturb my equanimity for a moment. The audience, which numbered about 200, listened with extreme attention, took up every point, and it was a pleasure to talk to them.

After the lecture was over, an aristocratic looking old gentleman was introduced to me, and after thanking me cordially for my lecture, said, " You, sir, as a public man, doubtless have influence in high quarters. Now, I should feel extremely obliged if you would kindly do me a favour. You are perhaps not aware that the

Abyssinian War of 1868 was undertaken solely on my account. The public are not generally aware of the fact, and I want the real circumstances of the case published. They have been kept dark too long, and my reputation has suffered greatly."

At this point one of the medical superintendents interposed and reminded my interlocutor that I had been speaking for an hour and a half and must certainly be ready for my supper, which was waiting for me. The courteous old gentleman begged a thousand pardons, and hastily added :

" I will not detain you now. But here are all the official papers relating to the affair, which you can peruse at your leisure."

On looking at the papers afterwards, I found them to consist solely of a number of French illustrated comic journals, containing some cartoons relating to the war. I was told that this was his monomania, and that on any other subject he appeared to think and talk sanely.

Another member of my audience with whom I had a most intelligent and agreeable chat, was a victim to a still more curious monomania.

When I was going around the extensive grounds the next morning he was pointed out to me as he sat writing in the gentlemen's reading-room—a lofty, handsomely-furnished apartment, with French windows opening on the lawn.

" That," said my hostess, " is Mr.——, who was so enthusiastic about your lecture. I think I can tell you exactly what he is writing. He is drawing up a petition to the Home Secretary, calling attention to the cruel and barbarous treatment to which he is subjected here. He is describing himself as imprisoned in a cell 10 ft. by 6 ft., with his left hand chained to the arm of a warder who never leaves him, and he is asking indignantly why he, a perfectly innocent citizen, who has never been convicted of any crime, should, in defiance of the laws of a free country, be condemned to such cruel and

illegal punishment. As soon as his letter is finished he will seal it up, step out on the lawn, and we shall probably see him playing tennis as we come back."

And sure enough, on our return, this imaginary victim of cruelty and injustice was in full enjoyment of a four-handed game. His petition was shown to me afterwards, and it was couched in precisely the terms described by my hostess. Every week he delivered himself of a similar epistle, and that was *his* monomania.

I have lectured many times since then both at that and similar lunatic asylums, and have invariably found the audiences attentive and intelligent, nor has any unpleasant incident marred the pleasure of talking to them.

I have had individual monomaniacs among my hearers on several occasions. Once, in a suburb of London after I had concluded my lecture, I was told that a lady wished to know if she might speak to me in private. I asked the secretary to show her into the committee room. When I entered, a lady in deep mourning, and evidently under the influence of strong emotion, came up to me, held out both her hands, and in a voice broken with sobs exclaimed, "I cannot tell you how deeply grateful I am to you for the touching and eloquent tribute you have paid to-night to my noble ancestor. *I am the last lineal descendant of Simon de Montford.* Your words have touched me to the heart. I revere his memory above all things. You have done justice to his grand character. You must forgive my emotion—I cannot control it. I am his last lineal descendant."

I am afraid I must have looked very foolish but I really had not the remotest idea what to say to such a totally unexpected outburst of reverential emotion. If it had been her own father or even grandfather I could have understood and sympathised with her, but an ancestor who had been dead 600 years!

It was like Mark Twain weeping over the grave of Adam.

A curious incident happened to me when I was lecturing at a Northern seaport on "The Romance of the North-West Passage." It was at the time of Sir George Nares's expedition to the North Pole and I think Lady Nares was amongst the audience. Just as I was leaving the platform at the end of the lecture, an excited voice called me by name and I saw a tall, grey, rather distinguished looking man forcing his way through the crowd. I stopped—he clambered upon the platform, seized both my hands and with tears in his eyes, said: "Sir, I am an old Arctic explorer—I could have discovered the North West Passage long before Franklin if the Government had not thwarted me. I want to talk to you about it, but your peroration has so excited and agitated me that I cannot collect my thoughts now. But here is my card—will you do me the honour to come and lunch with me to-morrow." As I was staying till late the next afternoon in the town I accepted his invitation.

I discovered from his card that he was a retired captain in the Royal Navy, bearing a name renowned in naval annals.

Early the next morning, just as I was sitting down to breakfast at my hotel—a note was brought to me. It was from the wife of the naval Captain begging me in her own and in her daughter's name, if possible, to find some excuse for evading my engagement to lunch. Her husband, she said, had been in such an excited state since my lecture that he had not slept all night. He suffered from delusions and she was afraid that if I came to lunch I should excite him still more and probably cause him a very serious attack of dementia. Of course I invented an excuse, a sudden summons home, and left the town before he had time to look me up at the hotel.

I had a long and perfectly coherent letter from him afterwards, the gist of which was that he had designed a ship of 5,000 tons burden so constructed that she could neither fasten herself nor be nipped or packed in the ice.

He had pointed out to the Admiralty the immense superiority of such a ship over the " Alert " and " Discovery," selected for Captain Nares' expedition, and they thanked him but declined to take any steps to carry out the suggestion. With such a ship he maintained that the voyage by the North West Passage to California and back could be done in 60 days : and, at a £7 per ton rate freightage, there was a boundless source of wealth if only some one with capital and influence would take up his scheme. He had applied repeatedly to the Government but they refused to entertain the project. He begged me to use what interest I had to help him to raise the funds for building and equipping his patent ship and suggested that I should make an earnest appeal on his behalf whenever I delivered my lecture on the " North West Passage." I did not accede to his request, but I have thought since that there may have been something in the idea and that the gallant sailor may not have been as mad as his friends believed him to be.

I think that without exception the most unpleasant experience I ever had on the platform was when lecturing for the Sunday Lecture Society at St. George's Hall, Langham Place. The subject was " Kings and their Fools " and at the close I said something, by no means fulsome, in praise of the character of our own Queen Victoria both as woman and sovereign. To my amazement the allusion to Her Majesty was greeted with hisses, howls and derisive hoots —an ebullition of hostility worthy of the lowest hooligans. And *that* in the heart of the West End of London, on Sunday the 6th of January 1889, within two years of the celebration of the Queen's first Jubilee ! Ten years before the Jubilee I should not have been in the least surprised at such an outburst of hostile feeling to Royalty, for loyalty to the reigning sovereign was then at a very low ebb and there were many places where it was not safe to bring in any allusion to the Queen lest it should provoke an unpleasant

outbreak of antagonism. But after that exuberant display of loyal enthusiasm and affection in 1887 such a demonstration from a London audience certainly came upon me with a shock.

The most ludicrous sight I ever saw from the platform was not when I was lecturing but when I was giving readings with Canon Fleming at Camberwell—before he migrated to St. Michael's, Chester Square. I was just about to commence a serious piece when the door at the bottom of the hall opened and a respectably dressed middle aged woman entered. There was a row of empty forms at the extreme end of the room. Fearful of disturbing the audience she stole very softly and gingerly on tip-toe to the nearest form and popped herself down on the end. Up went the form instantly—down on the floor sat the lady very suddenly—*crash* the form came down again and every startled member of the audience turned quickly round to see what had caused the terrific clatter. But I alone had seen the comedy in its entirety and I shook with laughter, I could not contain myself. When I had calmed down a little I explained that I was not in a condition to give the serious piece announced—but would substitute a comic one. The sight of that woman's face as the form suddenly rose and deposited her on the floor "arrides me," as Elia would have said, even yet. And the poor thing meant to make such a noiseless and unobtrusive entrance!

Canon Fleming, by the way, was one of the most accomplished elocutionists I ever heard. His voice was naturally weak, but it had been so skilfully trained that he was able to use it with quite astonishing effect. As a preacher, I always felt him disappointing. The manner was admirable but the matter was thin—and his lecture on "Grace Darling," the only one I ever heard him deliver, was quite saccharine and cloying with the sweetness of its sentiment. He was not an orator, though his fine elocution enabled him to make even

platitudes sound sonorous and impressive. But as a reader he was singularly effective. To hear him give Campbell's "Last Man" was a revelation. I candidly confess that I never knew what power there was in the poem till I heard Canon Fleming render it with wonderful dramatic force and passion. In pathos, too, he was equally excellent. His rendering of Sterne's "Story of Le Fevre" was marked by exquisite delicacy and tenderness.

One curious episode I may narrate in connection with "Humours of the Platform," though it did not actually affect myself. I assisted once at the exposure of an impostor, a charlatan who had been guilty of the grossest plagiarism. He had gained notoriety by his orations both here and in the Colonies. I went to hear him and was struck not only by his superb elocution but also by the beauty of his language and the great literary merit of his address. The next day I happened to have to refer to Froude's History and *there* I found the source of most of the fine passages which had delighted me the night before. The man's oration was "cribbed" from beginning to end! With the assistance of the editor of a well-known London weekly who had also heard the orator, I traced all the most notable descriptive passages in the oration, to their origin. We determined to bring the plagiarist to book. He was announced to appear again in London the following week. On the morning of the day on which he was to orate he received a letter informing him that eight gentlemen would be present in the hall each armed with a copy of Froude's History and the two other well known master pieces from which he had pilfered his material, and unless he acknowledged in every case the author to whom he was indebted, we should get up in a body at the close of his lecture and, book in hand, denounce him as a plagiarist and an impostor. He came on the platform in much less flamboyant guise than on the former occasion. I have often speculated on what his feelings must have been as

he cast his eye over the packed audience and wondered where amongst that sea of faces were the terrible eight who were sworn to expose him. He had not the nerve or cheek, however, to face the risk of exposure. He gave chapter and verse for each glowing passage of noble English that he reeled off, and in acknowledging the vote of thanks claimed no credit for anything but a certain skill in elocution. Our victory was complete, but I think we were all a little disappointed at not having had a chance of going for the impudent plagiarist—still, we felt that it was only sportsmanlike to give him a chance. I don't think that he ever dared to deliver that particular oration again without acknowledging the sources of his eloquence. He could hardly have felt safe—however far away from London he might be. But for some years afterwards he continued to be a shining light in the provinces. He is dead now and I daresay forgotten—for platform fame is transitory and evanescent.

I have mentioned one ludicrous sight which upset my gravity on the platform, but nothing that I ever saw equalled in grotesque absurdity an experience of the late Lord Neaves at Leven. I lectured there the following week and heard the story from eye witnesses whilst it was still fresh. Lord Neaves, as most persons are aware, was one of the wittiest of the Scottish law lords, with fine literary tastes which found expression both in prose and verse. His name was enough to draw a crowded house anywhere in Scotland. He was to lecture at Leven on "Modern novels and novelists" and a very racy address was expected. The hall was lighted, I think, with gas, but there were two candles in brackets attached to the reading desk. Lord Neaves was an old man—not very nimble on his pins. When he stood up to the desk and took out his manuscript he gave a sudden jerk of his head—and in an instant his wig was in flames. The Chairman and one or two of the audience rushed to extinguish the fire—but Lord Neaves himself had pulled off the wig, dashed it on the floor and trampled on it.

The wig was picked up and restored to him but on trying to adjust it he knocked off his glasses—stooping to regain them, his false teeth dropped out. The two members of the audience who had climbed on the platform at once rushed to pick up these fresh impedimenta, but were so overcome with laughter that they knocked their heads together and could not for the life of them pick up either the teeth or glasses. The Chairman came to the rescue and solemnly handed first the glasses, then the teeth to Lord Neaves, who, turning his back to the audience, bridged his nose with the latter and fixed the former in his mouth. Then, with his scorched wig still awry, he settled the manuscript before him and commenced his lecture. The audience composed itself to listen but not a word was intelligible. The lecturer went gravely on, yet not the faintest allusion to novels or novelists could any one of his bewildered hearers catch—the names of Justinian and Ulpian cropped up occasionally and references to Roman law were frequent. What did it all mean? Lord Neaves did not condescend to give any explanation, but finished his lecture and withdrew from the platform amid very faint applause. In the Committee-room afterwards he admitted with a twinkle in his eye that he had put the wrong manuscript in his pocket—that the lecture he had just given was the address on Roman Civil Law which he had delivered that morning to the law students of Edinburgh. It was the sudden start on finding his mistake that had sent his wig into the candle flame and caused the subsequent disasters. But he had his revenge on the audience for the audible titters which greeted his discomfiture. How he must have chuckled over their bewilderment as he solemnly and impressively lectured to them on "Roman Civil Law" whilst they were trying to believe that they were listening to a discourse on "Modern Novels and Novelists."

I am conscious that the term "lecture" is a misnomer as applied to the platform addresses of which I have

been writing. Lecturing implies reading a manuscript from a desk. But no man can hold an audience, a mixed audience at any rate, for an hour and a half or two hours if he reads from manuscript. One must meet one's hearers eye to eye to keep a grip on them and one must not disdain the assistance of elocutionary art and dramatic gesture. In fact, one must borrow a good deal from the actor to be effective; and, for my own part, I will admit that whenever I went to a theatre I carefully took note of any little histrionic trick or device which might help me to give point to a story or graphic force to an episode.

But *nous avons changè tout cela.* The platform orator of my day is as extinct almost as the dodo. He has long since ceased to "draw." The patrons of the lecture hall will not have him at any price. To be acceptable as a lecturer now, a man must have made a name of some sort for something else—must be a celebrity in whose individual personality the public is interested—a traveller, an adventurer, an inventor, an author—who has done something to make himself, at any rate for the moment, famous or notorious. Whether he have any capacity for lecturing or not, is quite a minor consideration. In any case, people will only want to see and hear him once, and it is of little moment whether he bores them or not.

The Lecture Agent is to some extent responsible for the change in the public taste, or at all events for the extinction of the professional lecturer. All lecturing business is now in the hands of one or two agencies ; the various Societies and Institutions will not deal directly with the lecturer. In my time it was different. One had to plan out all one's tours one's self and thus came into personal touch with the Secretaries. It entailed a wearisome lot of correspondence, but it was not the least interesting part of a lecturer's experiences. One was able to dovetail places into a tour in a way which the Agent would never take the trouble to do, and when

fees were small this was the only mode of making the thing pay. It was not worth the Agent's while to make elaborate arrangements with small Institutions only able to pay small fees. And no Agent in whose hands I ever placed myself did half as well for me in arranging tours as I did for myself. Of course the Agencies have been instrumental in raising fees in those Institutes that can afford to pay and so far the lecturer scores. Moreover the lecturer is relieved of all correspondence and of many troubles and worries which used to fall to his lot. But then his name and the desire of the public to see him in the flesh are the lecturer's chief attraction now—he may be the veriest duffer as a speaker, yet he can trust his agent to book as many engagements as he can fulfil for one season at any rate.

On the whole my recollections of the platform are pleasant. My lecturing tours added the spice of variety to my life. I visited many places year after year till I felt myself a personal friend of every man and woman in my audience and I made many delightful friends among those who offered me hospitality. I found the Northern audiences as a rule the best, the most intelligent and appreciative. But there were Southern towns such as Plymouth, Southampton, Weymouth and Winchester where I received as kindly and enthusiastic welcome as any lecturer could wish to cheer him.

They can never come again—such days as I knew—such experiences as I had on the platform. "The old order changeth yielding place to new," and who shall say that the change is not for the better?

VII

Recollections of the Theatre

The first actor I ever saw was Macready. I could not have been much more than seven at the time, and it is but a vague recollection that I retain of being taken by an aunt to a big house belonging to my uncle, which I afterwards knew well as Sherborne House, then occupied by the eminent tragedian as tenant. The hall was a very lofty and spacious one, and in the centre was a strange object on four legs covered with what I thought was a sheet. I ventured timidly to lift a corner of the sheet, and I suppose I must have asked my aunt in a whisper what the mysterious object was, for I remember she said to the big, dark man to whom she was talking :

" He has never seen a billiard table."

Whereupon the big man threw off the covering and, drawing me to the table, took up a cue, and struck the balls, then, laying his great hand on my head, said in a deep voice :

" There ! my little man, now you know what a billiard table is."

But I had not the least idea what an actor was, when I was told that the big man with the deep voice was a famous actor. For I was brought up on strict Puritan principles ; the play and the playhouse were anathema—evil things to be classed with the world, the flesh and the devil. Though I am bound to say that even the narrowest Evangelicals were willing to make an exception in Macready's case and admit that he was, according to his lights, a Christian man—*after* he had retired from his profession.

In later years my teacher in elocution was a protégé of Macready's who had often acted with him—Charles

Hartley Smith, who numbered among his pupils Canon Fleming, the Rev. W. Morley Punshon (the famous Wesleyan orator), and some distinguished members of the Bar. Sir Edward Clarke, I think, was one of the latter. Hartley Smith (an excellent teacher, by the way, with original and effective methods of strengthening and developing the voice) told me many stories of Macready's violent temper, and of the terror with which both actors and actresses viewed the prospect of being brought into close contact with him on the stage. When Fanny Kemble played Desdemona to his Othello, she was bruised all over, and was in mortal dread lest he should really smother her when he took the pillow in his hand—for the look on his face as he uttered the words "Thou art to die," was so awful in its intensity of doom that she felt as if she had not another minute to live.

She congratulated herself that in Lady Macbeth she could not possibly suffer from Macready's unnecessary violence in acting, because there was no opportunity for displaying it. But she was much astonished and dismayed when at the exclamation "Bring forth men-children only," he seized her ferociously by the wrist and compelled her to make a demivolte or pirouette such as that lady did surely never before perform under the influence of her husband's admiration.

Actors who had to endure the full fury of the tragedian's passion on the stage were generally so severely man-handled that they demanded extra pay when they had to play with Macready—he would sometimes hurl them to the ground or half way across the stage in the transports of his histrionic rage.

But Hartley Smith told me one story in which the tables were turned on Macready, and his arrogance for once received a check. It happened during his memorable tour through the United States, when his rivalry with the American actor, Forrest, resulted in the dastardly attempt of a New York mob to lynch Macready

on the stage of the Astor Place Theatre. The troops had to be called out to quell the terrible riot which ensued, and twenty persons were shot dead, besides scores who were wounded, before the military mastered the rioters. That by the way—Hartley Smith's story had nothing to do with that tragic incident. It was to this effect. Macready had engaged several American actors to recruit his company, and to one of them was allotted the part of the King in "Hamlet." The great tragedian always created a profound impression in the death scene, and was very particular in his instructions to the representatives of the King and Laertes to let the Prince of Denmark have a clear space near the footlights in which he could draw his last breath with proper dignity. On this occasion the King dropped, dying, on the very spot which Macready had marked for his own death scene. Hamlet strode up to him and in a fierce whisper, said:

"Die further up the stage, sir."

The expiring King made no response but gave his last gasp in silence.

"Damn you, do you hear me, sir! die further up the stage, sir."

Whereupon the royal corpse lifted its head, and replied:

"I guess I'm King here, and I'll die where I dam please."

And not a step further up the stage would the dead monarch budge.

Macready's admirers, and their name was Legion in my early days, would never admit that he had a superior as a tragedian. They scoffed at Henry Irving when he essayed to play the Shakespearean parts with which their idol's fame was in their minds inseparably associated. The Lyceum "Hamlet" was voted a ludicrous farce—the Lyceum "Macbeth" a wretched travesty—by comparison with the splendid performances of Macready. Of course the fame of great actors rests entirely upon tradition. They leave nothing

behind them by which future generations can judge of their excellence. When a venerable playgoer would tell me that Henry Irving was a mere stick compared with Macready or Edmund Kean, I had only his word as a proof of his assertion, and the word of a *laudator temporis acti* must generally be taken with a very liberal grain of salt. But this I will say, that no actor or actress has ever moved me as playgoers of a previous generation declared that they were moved by Edmund Kean, Macready or Mrs. Siddons. Founding my ideas on these traditions, I have not in all my experience seen either actor or actress whom I could call really great, tested by that standard. *None* of them have come up to the expectations which the enthusiastic admirers of the old race of players raised in me. Of course the old-time playgoers may have exaggerated their emotions, very likely they did: but I can only say that I have never been thrilled in the theatre—never carried out of myself by any piece of acting I have seen, though I have seen some undeniably fine acting—as the contemporaries of Siddons, Kean and Macready, according to their own account, frequently were. Two or three times Irving went near producing such an effect upon me. Once in "Richelieu," when on the "day of Dupes" the news comes to him, as he is apparently dreaming and dozing in dotage by the fire, that his triumph over his enemies is complete, and he starts suddenly to his feet and throws off the mask. I felt an electric thrill *then*, and again when, after the play-scene in "Hamlet" he springs up from his recumbent attitude, crying, "What! frighted with false fire!" and then leaps into the throne. And again in Macbeth in the last desperate fight to the death with Macduff. Perhaps I should add the final scene in "The Bells," though that was rather a long-drawn tensity of absorbed interest. But whilst Irving always roused in me the keenest intellectual expectation and appreciation, he never moved me as Kean and Macready are said to have moved playgoers.

But to get back to my muttons. The first actor I knew intimately was Sam Emery. It was in my "Cosmopolitan" days—our offices were then almost opposite to the old Strand Theatre, where Emery was then acting in John Daly's comedy "Old Salt," and I was introduced to him by the sub-editor. We used to give little luncheons in our office on Saturdays, oysters and stout being the staple fare—"natives" were then only sixpence a dozen, and there were excellent "seconds" to be procured at sixpence a score. At that time, being new to the stage and its professors, I stood rather in awe of the actor, as a mysterious creature of occult powers; familiarity has, I fear, since then bred, I will not say contempt, that would be both rude and untrue, but a feeling of disillusioned indifference for the mummer and his art. I timidly asked the sub-editor if he thought Mr. Emery would consent to be my guest on one of these Saturday functions.

"Try him," he said drily.

I did try him, and the popular actor was condescending enough to accept the invitation. It was a proud moment in my life when, for the first time, I had the honour of entertaining a real live actor, and an actor whose name was in everybody's mouth, for there was not a more popular member of *the* Profession at that time than Sam Emery. But, perhaps, a still prouder moment was that which saw me presiding over a little supper-party graced by the presence of the first actress I ever met—the charming Nellie Moore. She was playing with Emery in "Old Salt," in the rôle of a hoydenish school-girl. It gives me pleasure even now to recall one scene in the play, where, sitting on a table in a short frock, waving her legs, with an apple in one hand and "Mangnall's Questions" in the other, she alternately took a bite at the one and tried to commit to memory question and answer from the other. Thus:

"The moon is"—bite—"two hundred and fifty"—bite—"How far is the moon?"—bite—"from the

earth "—bite—" Oh ! bother the moon ! I'll finish my apple first."

There was a swing, a go, a charm, an abandon about her acting which delighted me. And then, with her fair hair and blue eyes, she looked so pretty ! It was a shock to me to discover, when I met her off the stage, that though her eyes were blue, her hair was not golden, nor was she anything like as pretty as when seen from the other side of the footlights. That, I now know, is more or less the case with every actress. But she was bright and chic, and many hearts were sore when she died a few months later, on the sunny side of thirty.

With Sam Emery I kept up an intimacy for many years. He was a fine, racy, breezy actor. His " party by the name o' Johnson " in Byron's " Dearer than Life," his Peggotty, his Boffin—stand out in my memory as refreshing bits of comedy. A very different rôle from any of these was his impersonation of the Puritan hero of Richard Lee's " Chivalry." The scene of the play is laid in the reign of James the Second, about the time of Monmouth's rebellion, and Emery gave a very fine rendering of the part of a Puritan gentleman of the best type. The play lingers in my memory, not so much because of Emery's acting, as for a ludicrous incident which happened to myself. In the most thrilling scene of the drama, the hero (Emery) is trapped by his enemies. The house is surrounded by " Kirke's Lambs," and a body of them is drawn up in the entrance hall. The hero is seen descending a flight of stairs, apparently bent on escaping through a side door. The brutal officer in command of the " Lambs " gives the order to fire—the muskets come up to the shoulders with a clash—the barrels are levelled, the fingers press the triggers. It was a thrilling moment ; everyone expected a volley—a very décolletée lady, my next neighbour in the stalls, a perfect stranger to me, suddenly flung herself upon me and buried her face in my

shirt front: I had drawn myself up stiffly, and with strained nerves was awaiting the crash of the volley. But no sound came—the heroine had suddenly appeared in the line of fire between the musketeers and the hero and baulked their purpose. The lady, who had flung herself with such abandonment upon my bosom, raised her head, her cheeks were crimson, and she looked extremely foolish as she stammered:

"Oh! I—I—beg your pardon—I—I—thought they were going to fire—and I—I—have such a horror of fire-arms, that I—I—quite forgot myself. I—I—beg your pardon."

I blurted out some conventional acceptance of the apology. I reproach myself now with not having paid her some pretty compliment, and expressed my delight at the honour she had done me in taking refuge on my manly bosom. But—her charms were mature and I was young, and I was not skilled in the art of courteous lying which comes so easily to the experienced man of the world.

The Strand burlesques were then the most popular theatrical performances in Town. William Brough and Henry James Byron were the most prolific producers of these extravaganzas, generally founded on Oriental themes, which gave opportunity for gorgeous display. Among the actresses who played in them, Elise Holt was, I think, the greatest favourite; she had one of the most charming figures I ever saw, and she displayed it liberally. The ample and voluptuous proportions of Ada Swanborough were also a source of attraction to lovers of the human form, and Amy Sheridan too "a daughter of the gods, divinely tall and most divinely fair" had a host of admirers. The stars of burlesque certainly made no secret of their charms and left little to the imagination. But it does not at all follow that because a woman makes a liberal display of her person on the stage that she is necessarily immodest. Many of them are trained from their childhood to regard such

public exhibitions of themselves as simply part and parcel of the stage illusion. It is told of the daughter of a great actor, Macklin, I think, who was notorious for the lavish display of her shapely limbs and figure on the stage, that she was in private life so modest that she refused to allow a doctor to examine her knee, which had been slightly injured, and, though the hurt grew worse and worse till mortification set in, she preferred to die rather than let her bare limb be exposed to the eye of any man—even the privileged eye of a surgeon.

I will not go so far as to say that the goddesses of burlesque in my day—the bewitching Kate Santley who wrought havoc in the heart of a celebrated Serjeant-at-law—or fair-haired, fascinating Lydia Thompson, who for a while captured the volatile affections of a distinguished novelist, and whose world-famous troupe of blondes (The Auri-comous Sirens) were accused of demoralising every city in the United States from New York to San Francisco, from Chicago to St. Louis—I will not say that these ladies were afflicted with such excess of modesty as would have led them to sacrifice life or limb rather than allow even a surgeon's gaze to rest upon their nude knees. But I still maintain that it is not the women who make histrionic display of their figures on the stage that are the most immodest in private life, but often the reverse. To the outsider there may seem a very thin line between the flimsy veil of tights and "fleshings," and the simple undress of Mother Eve, but to the girl who has been trained from childhood to regard tights as drapery, the difference is very broadly defined—it is the difference between the draped and the undraped.

I sometimes wonder now what the public could have seen in the inanities of burlesque to warrant its patronage. Legs and puns, were the main elements of burlesque—the former I admit admirable of their kind—the latter, as a rule, absolutely excruciating in their idiocy. I suppose life was so sordid and mean and colourless

among the middle and lower-classes that the brightness and glitter and brilliant spectacular effects of the "extravaganza" afforded a contrast so striking as to be irresistibly attractive. Anyhow the burlesques, inane and stupid as they generally were, from a literary or intellectual point of view, *did* draw. The theatres which made a feature of such shows were the most prosperous in London, and even the cleverest actors and actresses of the day did not disdain to act in them.

John Hollingshead lifted burlesque into a more aristocratic atmosphere when he started the Gaiety, and all who remember Nellie Farren, "the Darling of the Boys," will admit that that charming actress was never seen to greater advantage than in some of her burlesque parts, what time Toole, and Royce and Stoyle, and the limber-limbed Vokescs were her fellow-players.

Burlesque, I must frankly admit, had not much attraction for me, it generally bored me. But there were exceptions, and I remember two burlesques which I thoroughly enjoyed—Burnand's "Black-eyed Susan," and "The Lady of Lyons," at the little Royalty Theatre in Dean Street, Soho. Fred Dewar, Teddy Danvers, Charlotte Saunders, and Patty Oliver, made a quartette which had no equal at that time on the London boards. Who that ever heard Charlotte Saunders' laugh could forget it? It was the finest, raciest, heartiest, most natural, most infectious laugh I ever heard on the stage. It provoked an instant response from the audience. The dullest churl that ever poked his lugubrious visage into a theatre could not have withstood that laugh. It was an infallible cure for melancholy. I don't know whether doctors ever prescribed it for hypochondriacal and low-spirited patients—as a famous physician once prescribed a dose of Liston in comedy to that wretched humorist himself —but they might well have done so, and the prescription would have worked wonders.

There comes before me as I write a vision of Charlotte Saunders in the burlesque of " The Lady of Lyons," as the first Napoleon. The imitation was perfect—the long grey surtout, the cocked hat, the hands crossed behind the back, the grand, calm, inscrutable face—they were all there, true to the life—a portrait that lives in my memory as a triumph of the art of making up.

Fred Dewar was an actor of extraordinary dash and spirit, capable of much higher achievement than his erratic habits ever allowed him to attain, and Teddy Danvers was gifted with a face that would have made the fortune of any low comedian. It was so absolutely wooden and expressionless that it seemed impossible that it should express any emotion whatever. But there was humour in its very stupidity—and Danvers could make himself look so irresistibly funny, and bring out his wheezes with such a queer comical croak that you never troubled yourself to ask whether he had any real histrionic talent or not. He was Teddy Danvers and he made you laugh—that was enough. And then there was Patty Oliver, as simple, graceful and natural an actress as one could wish to see. I don't think anyone who saw her as " Susan " in the burlesque of " Black-eyed Susan," and heard her sing her reply to " Pretty Se-usan, don't say no," a song which had a quadruple encore every night, is likely to have forgotten her. That burlesque ran for four hundred consecutive nights—all London went to see it—and Fred Dewar's " Captain Crosstree " and Danvers's " Widow Twankey " made young and old shake their sides with laughter. The dancing, too, was as clever as the acting—for all the stars at the Royalty could dance, and good dancing is always a sight worth seeing. At this remote little theatre, hidden away in a most unfashionable locality, you got burlesque at its best—not the flashy extravaganzas of the Strand and the Gaiety—but real, genuine, rollicking, side-splitting fun.

You seldom hear such laughter now, unless it be in

the music-hall; your refined and cultured playgoer of the twentieth century has no use for laughter, that is to say, of the rude, vulgar, barbaric, mid-Victorian type. Readers of "Punch" would, I suppose, hardly tolerate to-day the humour of John Leech and Charles Keene, which was essentially laugh-provoking. Your latter-day humorist's subtler methods aim only at titillating your sense of humour to the extent of eliciting a smile. Well, the smile may connote a far keener intellectual pleasure than the laugh. It is not laughter, but a ripple of silent, internal, exquisite appreciation that the best comedy provokes. This is what the literary and dramatic epicure enjoys most. Still, laughter, even of the broadest, has its uses, and is one of the best pills to purge melancholy withal.

A notable laughter-maker of my early days was J. S. Clarke, the American actor, who for some time was lessee of the Strand Theatre. I have never seen any actor, with possibly the single exception of Shiel Barry, who had such an extraordinary power and variety of facial expression as J. S. Clarke. His rendering of Dr. Pangloss in Colman's "Heir at Law" was the best thing of its kind I ever saw. The sly humour of his asides—the indescribable mixture of cunning and humbug in his expression when he was trying to reconcile honesty and greed—were things that time has not dislodged from my memory. Even his buffoonery was really mirth-provoking. You could not help laughing until the back of your neck ached, though you could have kicked yourself for very shame at being forced against your will to laugh at such idiotic inanities. "Toodles," "Among the Breakers" and "Felix de Boots" are among the triumphs of laughter-making out of the slenderest materials that I associate with the name of J. S. Clarke.

There was another Clarke, a contemporary of the American's, who was really a finer comedian, though he had not equal gifts of facial expression. "Johnnie"

Clarke or "Lame" Clarke, as he was called to distinguish him from the other, had a dry humour which found admirable expression in such parts as Matthew Pincher in H. J. Byron's really brilliant comedy "Cyril's Success," by far the best play that Byron ever wrote, and quite worthy of revival. But "Johnnie" was also great in pure farce. In "Brown among the Brahmins" he was quite as mirth-provoking as his namesake.

"Johnnie" Clarke was a capital raconteur and his reminiscences were of the raciest type. I remember one funny story he told me of his own experiences. In his early days, when he was very impecunious, he started as a photographer—a vocation not so overcrowded as it now is. He had purchased a camera and plates, but at that point his resources failed, and he was unable to invest in the necessary chemicals. To his embarrassment, while his apparatus was in this imperfect condition, a lady called to be photographed. The future comedian was, however, equal to the occasion; he arranged the camera, posed his sitter and went through the usual business, though of course no result other than a blank was possible. Then he ventured gently to remind the lady, who was a perfect stranger to him, that it was customary to pay in advance before forwarding copies from the negative. The lady made no demur, but paid and departed. No sooner was she out of sight than the photographer darted out and purchased the needful accessories to his art. Then, a day or two later, he wrote to the lady, expressing his deep regret that the negative had been accidentally broken and begging her to sit for him again. She consented, and *this* time she *was* photographed, and duly received the copies.

Among notable actors whom I have known personally was the great Scotsman "Tam" Powrie. He was an enthusiastic patron of the Prize Ring; a warm admirer and backer of Tom Sayers, and as I, too, was a

votary and patron of the "noble art" there was a common bond of union between us. The only part in which I ever saw Powrie play, and I fancy it must have been one of his best, was that of "Rob Roy" in the drama adapted from Sir Walter Scott's novel. The first time he played it in London, he so severely sprained his ankle on the first night of his performance that he had to cancel his engagement. On the second occasion of his appearing before Londoners at Drury Lane there was fortunately no mishap. Phelps was the Bailie Nicol Jarvie, of which more anon. Powrie was the ideal Rob Roy—in physique and colour he was the Highland cateran with little need for stage make-up. Nature had given him the very aspect of Rob, and his acting was perfect. There is one scene which comes back to me vividly as I write. It is that in which the Bailie pays his visit to the Tolbooth, and to his amazement discovers in the stranger seated on the table, carelessly swinging his heel against the foot of it—Rob Roy himself.

"Ah! eh? oh!" exclaims the Bailie, "My conscience! it's impossible! and yet—no! Ma conscience! it canna be—and yet again—Deil hae me that I suld say sae—Ye robber—ye cateran—ye born deevil that ye are, to a' bad ends and nae gude ane—can this be *you*?"

"E'en as ye see Bailie."

"Conscience! if I'm na clean bombaized—*you*, ye cheat-the-wuddy rogue—*you* here on your venture in the Tolbooth o' Glasgow! What d'ye think o' the value o' your head?"

"Umph! why, fairly weighed and Dutch weight, it might weigh down one provost's, four bailies', a town-clerk's, six deacons'—besides stent-masters'—"

"Ah! ye reevin' villain! But tell ower your sins, for if I say the word—"

"True, Bailie, but ye will never say that word."

"And why suld I not? Why suld I not? Answer me that—why suld I not?"

" For three good and and sufficient reasons, Bailie Jarvie. *First*—for auld lang syne—*second* for the sake of the auld wife ayont the fire at Stuckavrallachan that made some mixture of our bluids, to my own proper shame be it spoken ! that has a cousin in accounts, and yarn wincies and looms and shuttles like a mere mechanical person : and *lastly*, Bailie, because if I saw a sign o' you betraying me, I would plaster that wa' with your harns (brains) ere the hand of man could rescue you."

The way Powrie delivered this last speech, the sudden change from the coolness and matchless imperturbability of his badinage, to the fierce threat in his final words, was thrilling. I cannot conceive of the scene being more finely rendered.

Phelps's Bailie too, was a fine piece of acting, full of dry pawky humour, though Scotchmen derided his accent, which certainly had its lapses, but in the main was excellent—as it was in a still greater part of his, Sir Pertinax MacSycophant—at any rate quite good enough for English audiences.

The one and only Bailie, according to all Scotchmen, was their own countryman, Charles Mackay, who created the part, when the play was first produced by W. H. Murray, at the Edinburgh Theatre Royal. Mackay was a Glasgow man, and was therefore peculiarly qualified to portray the character of a Glasgow Bailie. Lockhart in his life of Scott says " it was extremely diverting to watch the play of Scott's features during this admirable realization of his conception."

When Mackay was coming up to London, Sir Walter wrote thus about him to Joanna Baillie, herself then a famous play-wright : " The immediate motive of my writing to you, my dearest friend, is to make Mrs. Agnes and you aware that a Scots performer called Mackay is going up to London to play Bailie Nicol Jarvie at Covent Garden, and to beg you of all dear loves to go and see him; for, taking him in that single character, I am not

sure I ever saw anything in my life possessing so much truth and comic effect at the same time: he is completely the personage of the drama, the purse-proud consequential Magistrate, humane and irritable in the same moment, and the true Scotsman in every turn of thought and action . . . . . you would think the part made for him and him for the part . . . . the man, I am told, is perfectly respectable in his life and habits and consequently deserves encouragement in every way."

That last sentence is very significant of the status of the actor in those days and the general disposition of the public to regard him with suspicion as not quite respectable.

Mackay, however, despite Sir Walter's eulogy, was not a success in London. His Scotch was *too* Scotch for English folk, and they failed to take his points. Phelps was much more to their taste.

W. H. Murray, the great Edinburgh actor-manager and the intimate friend of Sir Walter Scott, was still a name to conjure with when I first became acquainted with the stage. There was not an English actor of any note that had not been at some time brought under the spell of Murray's wonderful personality. To know him and to have played with him was a liberal dramatic education. I have heard many actors speak of him and it was always with respect and admiration. I was an intimate friend of his youngest son, William, who was up at Cambridge with me, and through him I came to know much of his father. Old Scottish playgoers have described him to me as the most finished actor they ever saw. And yet he usually contented himself with the smallest parts. In the first production of Rob Roy he took only the small part of Colonel Thornton—yet he put such spirit into it that it became big in his hands; and, subsequently, he cast himself for Major Galbraith, an even less conspicuous character, and again, to use the words of an old playgoer, who gave me his impressions:

" The stage seemed empty when he was not on it." In " King John " he contented himself with the apparently humble rôle of the " First Citizen," yet, by his finished and perfect acting, raised the part into the dignity of a creation. It was his delight to show his company that a great actor need not disdain the most insignificant characters, but by his careful and intelligent study of them could raise them into histrionic cameos.

As a manager, he was a stern disciplinarian, and an infallible judge of dramatic talent. To have the hall-mark of W. H. Murray's approval was the highest testimonial to ability that an actor or actress could covet. To be re-engaged by him was a feather in any player's cap. I remember Harry Boleno, the famous Drury Lane clown, telling me that you could always know whether you had pleased Murray to the extent of his contemplating a future re-engagement, by the way in which he said " good-bye " to you at the end of the current engagement. If he were particularly courteous in his farewell, you might be sure that you would *not* get another engagement from him. If he were rather brusque and off-hand in his adieux, you might take it for granted that there was a re-engagement in store for you.

Fanny Kemble described him as " one of the most perfect actors I have ever known on any stage," but made fun of his craze for love-making. " He could not address any woman," she says, " from the leading lady to the chamber-maid, without seeking to leave upon her the impression that he cherished a hopeless passion for her." Those who knew Mr. Murray in his later days, when he was a model of staidness and decorum, will hardly credit this statement of Fanny's, in which she has, I think, allowed that " imagination," which she admits was " paramount with her," to colour both her judgment and her memory.

At the commencement and close of every season, it was Murray's custom to deliver a rhymed address.

These addresses have been collected in a little volume, of which I possess a copy. They are written in fluent and graceful verse and many of them are extremely happy.

I came up to London too late to witness any of the wonderful series of Elizabethan plays which Phelps produced at Sadler's Wells, but I can well understand, from what I have heard from old playgoers who saw them all, that the modern English stage has seen nothing to surpass or even equal them. No one else, at any rate, has ever had the courage or enterprise to repeat the experiment. Think what it means to have drawn all London for *eighteen years* to remote, unfashionable Islington to witness classical drama—thirty-one plays of Shakespeare, and the masterpieces of Ben Jonson, Massinger, Marlowe and Otway! And he made it pay too! That is the marvellous part of it, and the supreme tribute to the splendid way in which the plays were staged and acted. What other actor-manager, before or since his time, could show a record that comes within measurable distance of that of Samuel Phelps at Sadler's Wells?

I saw Phelps in most of his great parts—in Lear, Macbeth, Dr. Cantwell (The Hypocrite), Job Thornbury (Colman's "John Bull"); Sir Pertinax MacSycophant (Macklin's "Man of the World") and he always impressed me profoundly, though I was never quite satisfied that he was really great in tragedy. His Macbeth and Richelieu, no doubt, were very fine, but I liked him best in comedy. His Pertinax MacSycophant was surely broad and racy enough in its humour to have titillated the diaphragm even of the proverbial Scotsman, if such a person exist—a fact of which "I hae ma doots." Breadth rather than subtlety was, I think, the feature of Phelps' comic acting. But who that saw him in Bottom would deny him the possession of the *vis comica* in its fulness? Who that saw that wonderful impersonation will ever forget the wordless comedy of the weaver's slow awakening—the solemn bewilderment of

gaze—the cautious half-timid feeling for the long ass's ears—the dismay at his denudation of those asinine appendages, the gradual dawning of enlightenment—the dubious conflict between memory and actuality—the inimitable pantomime of hand and eye and features—the successive waves of varied expression over the puzzled face. There, indeed, was comedy of the richest.

Phelps' voice was harsh and unmusical, at any rate in his later years, but he could use it with great effect, and had its modulation under complete control. His temper had some of the despotic arrogance of Macready, and it was not safe to intrude upon him at any hour of the day in which he was engaged in the study of a great character. In his family, instructions were given to every member of the household not to accost him—his meals were brought to him silently, and he ate them alone, a single pint of claret was all the stimulant that he allowed himself during the twenty-four hours before appearing on the stage. It is told of the Rev. C. R. Maturin, the author of "Bertram" and other tragedies and of that weird romance "Melmoth" which had a vogue in the first decade of the nineteenth century, that when he was in the throes of composition he used to fasten a wafer on his forehead, which was the signal, if any of his family entered his sanctum, that they must not speak to him. Phelps's *look*, I have been told, answered the same purpose. I remember even now the awe with which I used to regard his stern features and solemn gait when he occasionally visited his brother, the Master of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and undergraduates with bated breath pointed him out to one another as "Phelps, the great actor."

When I came up to London, Phelps had dissociated himself from any particular theatre, and contented himself with star engagements, mostly at Drury Lane. For these he received the highest remuneration of any actor then on the stage—£60 a week. But his engagements were generally of no great length and I should imagine

that this sum did not represent an income of more than £1,800 a year. Yet even that was then considered exceptional for an actor. Compared with the present colossal salaries, both at the theatre and the music-hall, the sums paid even to well-known actors and actresses forty years ago were ludicrously small. I remember that when I was reading in Chambers with a special pleader, we had a theatrical case in which it was necessary that we should examine the books of the Adelphi Theatre. I was amazed to find players of note receiving such salaries as £6, £5, and £3 10s. a week. £10 was considered a very big "screw" in those days, and the actor who earned an average of £4 week in and week out had reason to be thankful. Hundreds of histrions got no more than £2 or 30s. a week. But then they came of a class that had never been used to luxury—born mostly of Bohemian parents who had always lived from hand to mouth. I have often thought how strange it was that until within the last three decades the ranks of the theatrical profession were recruited almost entirely from one class of society—the lower middle-class. This class seemed to have a monopoly of the stage as a profession. So low was the social status of the actor that no one of gentle birth had the courage to go upon the stage and suffer the inevitable ostracism from society which such a step must entail. Gentlemen by birth and education were so rare on the stage in my early London days that they were regarded as phenomena. It was thought surprising that Mr. John Clayton, who had been educated at Eton, should take up the calling of an actor. There seemed to be an established idea that there was something disreputable about the stage which rendered it an unfit profession for any except people who were either *déclassés* or belonged to the lower stratum of the middle class. But when theatres multiplied, and salaries increased, ladies and gentlemen did not see why they should not boldly embrace a profession which had such rich prizes to offer

both in pelf and popularity. The result, of course, has been that the social status of the actor has been enormously raised. And that the stage is the better for it who will deny? There is a culture and refinement about the theatre now which was lacking forty years ago. The actor's art has been elevated to a higher level of finish since its exponents have been men and women of education and gentle breeding. This is particularly noticeable in plays which aim at the true delineation of society. "Who," asked Horace Walpole, nearly two hundred years ago, "Who should act genteel comedy but people of fashion that have sense? Actors and actresses can only guess at the tone of high life and cannot be inspired with it. Mrs. Oldfield played it so well, because she not only followed but often set the fashion." We have no actresses who have attained quite such a high social position as Nance Oldfield held, but we have at any rate plenty who are capable of doing justice to what Horace Walpole calls "genteel comedy." Anyone who remembers the awful "Adelphi Guests," the unhappy supers doomed to figure at functions in a sphere of life of which they knew no more than they did of the planet Mars, will admit that we have changed all that for the better. Though when it comes to real genius I daresay it will be oftener found in the lower than the higher of these two classes.

Charles Fechter I recall only as a romantic actor. I never saw his "Othello" about which many people raved, and his fair-wigged Hamlet left no great impression on me. His Shakespearean innovations were daring and original, but they have not supplanted old traditions. I have only once since seen any attempt to make the Prince of Denmark a blonde and blue-eyed Dane "à la Fechter" and that was in a very curious dramatic experiment of J. C. M. Bellew's, of which more anon. I saw Fechter in many romantic parts and, though he was always picturesque and pleasing, I should hardly call him great in any of them. Henry

Neville I should be inclined to place as quite his equal in such rôles. But there is one impersonation of Fechter's which lingers vividly in my memory, the character of Obenreizer in the dramatised version of "No Thoroughfare," by Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins. It was the Christmas number of "All the Year Round" and in its dramatic form at the Adelphi it was a great success. Night after night for many weeks the illuminated picture of the sensational scene on the Alps flamed in its grim horror from the portals of the Theatre, a striking object to every one coming up or down the Strand. Fechter's Obenreizer took the town by storm. He is the villain of the piece, and, among other remarkable characteristics, his great peculiarity was that a certain nameless film would come over his eyes—apparently by the action of his own will—which would impenetrably veil from his face every expression save one of attention. I don't know how he managed it, but Fechter reproduced that mysterious film with extraordinary fidelity and with the weirdest effect. It was a great piece of acting, and was immensely popular. His catch phrase, "So glad!" was in everybody's mouth. And Ben Webster's Joey Ladle, the cellar-man who took his wine in through the pores of his skin, was a scarcely less notable performance. Between them they carried the play triumphantly through what was then considered an almost phenomenal run.

With one exception I cannot recall any *great* tragic actress on the stage in my experience of it. The nearest approach I have seen to such acting as that with which Siddons and Rachel electrified play-goers was that of Ristori in the sleep-walking scene in Macbeth. I only saw her once and that was at a big benefit for some charitable object, I forget what, at the Opera Comique. She simply gave that one scene. From the moment she glided ghost-like on the stage, taper in hand—till she passed away, muttering in deep sepulchral tones "To bed—to bed — to bed" — she held the house

spell-bound. I have never seen any actress produce such an effect of horror. Her voice as she uttered the words "Out damned spot! out I say" sent a shuddering thrill through me which I can feel now as I recall it. The stillness in that packed theatre was appalling, it remained unbroken for more than a minute after she had disappeared from the stage. It seemed as if the audience had been suddenly struck into stone. No more eloquent testimony to her genius could any actress have desired. Then, as the spell was slowly dissolved, there rang out peal upon peal of applause. Yet I could have wished, and I think the actress would have wished, that the silence had remained unbroken. That would have been the higher tribute and there could have been no mistaking such silence for other than what it was—the supreme expression of an emotion which only the most superb display of dramatic art could have evoked.

Miss Bateman (Mrs. Crowe) produced a very striking effect in Mosenthal's "Leah." As the Jewish Maiden she was picturesque, romantic and moving. Her curse was the talk of London for months and her thrilling impersonation of the part lingers with me as a notable piece of acting which was full both of passion and pathos.

Of Mrs. Stirling I have a faint recollection in "The Hen and Chickens" as a charming comedienne, but her triumphs on the boards had been won before I came up to London. She was the best "Nurse" I ever saw in Romeo and Juliet. But it was as a reader that I knew her best—without exception the best woman reader I ever heard, and I have memories of Mrs. Dallas Glyn, Mrs. Scott Siddons, and other notables of the craft. Mrs. Stirling's voice had a great range, with the exception of Mrs. Howard Paul (who could bring up notes deep as those of a basso profundo) she had the best man's voice I ever heard a woman assume. Her rendering of the courting scene between Henry the Fifth and Katherine of France was an excellent piece of comedy, and in a

different vein Will Carleton's "Gone with a handsomer Man" was equally effective. But perhaps the finest effect was produced in Adam Lindsay Gordon's "Lament of the Stockrider"—the reverie of a broken down outcast gentleman camping alone in the Bush—who, in the paper which wraps his damper, discovers a copy of the old local journal at home with reports of the Hunt Ball and other county functions in which he once took part. Mrs. Stirling gave the "Stockrider" to the life with remarkable pathos and power.

The most wonderful actress I ever saw, was Pauline Virginie Déjazet. She came over to London at the time of the Franco-German war and with a company of exiled compatriots acted at the Opera Comique—the profits of their undertaking being patriotically devoted to the assistance of their besieged countrymen. Déjazet was then 74 and yet she played her old boy-parts with a verve and grace which were astonishing. I remember her best in Les Prés de St. Gervais in which she played the part of a young aristocrat of 16 who has escaped from his tutor and finds himself at a village fair. He has been brought up in the strictest seclusion—has never been allowed even to see a female of any age—girls are to him wonderful unknown creatures, whom, however, he finds strangely attractive. Déjazet's make-up was splendid—she was a charming boy—and if her voice were a little cracked in its higher notes, there was no other visible sign of age about her. I was introduced to her behind the scenes and begged for a photograph of her in the part I had just seen her play so admirably. She gave me one with her autograph—but insisted also in presenting me with one of herself *as she was* "an old woman"—"it will correct illusions," she said. "You must not fall in love with an old woman under false pretences." She was as dainty as a piece of old china—as a shepherdess in Dresden or Sévres. And her foot! The smallest, most graceful, and daintily shod I ever saw. When, five years later, she died at the age of

79 there was a rush to buy her shoes—the tiniest in Europe. What would not the purchasers have given to be able to stand in them!

There was nothing suggestive of senility in Déjazet, but there was in another actress of that period who would persist in lagging superfluous on the stage, long after the personal charms which were her chief claim to distinction had fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf. That was Madame Celeste. She had made her name as a dancer long before I was born. From 1831 to 1833 she was extremely popular in London. When her dancing began to wane she made a great hit as Miami the Indian Chieftainess in Buckstone's "Green Bushes." That was in 1845. I did not see her till she took the first of a long series of "farewells" in 1868. She had lost all her sprightliness and grace and it was painful to see her attempting to play the part of the lissom, agile Indian maiden—her limbs stiff and her face in wrinkles. Yet "Green Bushes" still had drawing power as long as Johnny Toole and Paul Bedford played the two comic sailors. Londoners never seemed tired of seeing that pair of comedians in this drama and Paul Bedford's "I b—believe your my b—b—boy" was for years one of the catch words of Cockaigne. But Celeste was a sad and pitiable spectacle. Those who went to see her, with recollections of the furore she had created in her youth, were terribly disillusioned. Yet she continued to make an exhibition of herself in annual "farewells" till she finally vanished from the boards in 1874 being then not far from three score and ten. She died in Paris eight years later.

"The beautiful Mrs. Rousby," bolstered into fame by Tom Taylor and the superb portrait in the Royal Academy (was it by Millais?) which set Society raving, was one of the pathetic failures that I recall. She appeared first as the heroine in a play specially written for her by Tom Taylor entitled "'Twixt Axe and Crown." She made a very graceful and picturesque figure on the

stage—with her long golden hair streaming down her back, and exhibited some genuine pathos in the scaffold scene—which was vividly presented on every hoarding in London—but she had no sustained power. Her only other appearance was, I think, in Miss Braddon's "Griselda," a play of considerable merit, but Mrs. Rousby failed to arouse interest as the heroine and ceased to be an attraction to the London playgoer. When I come to think of it, however, Mrs. Rousby played subsequently with Bandmann, the Anglo-German actor at the Lyceum. The name of the piece, was, I think, "Narcisse," and I remember that Bandmann, a man of violent temper and especially rough with women, was summoned for an outrageous assault upon her at rehearsal. He seized her by the arm, and, I think, dislocated her wrist; at any rate, his brutal violence roused a general feeling of indignation against him and sympathy with the beautiful woman who had suffered at his hands.

There were painful reasons, I believe, for her sudden retirement from the stage, and I have an idea that her end was tragic—she was killed whilst still young, if my memory does not play me false, by a fall from her horse at Brighton in 1879.

Of Marie Wilton and the little house in Tottenham Court Road, I have, of course, delightful recollections. The most pleasing of these, I think, centre round "School." There was something charmingly fresh and chic about her "Naomi Tighe" which has kept it greener in my memory than any other part associated with her name, though I do not know that it is generally considered one of her best impersonations. The scene in which she vainly tries as a ghost to frighten her big Guardsman lover (Bancroft) whilst he sits carelessly rocking on the swing in the moonlight—the reading of his first love-letter—who that heard and saw her could forget the expression on her face as she looks up from the letter to say doubtfully, half shocked, with

recollections of the school-room strong upon her: "He spells 'cochineal' with two e's!" Then adds with a delicious smile and a sigh of intense relief, "But love is superior to orthography." And then the scene at the prize-giving when Beau Farintosh (John Hare), whose eyeglass is generally in the middle of his back—addresses her by mistake as the prize-girl. Yes, it is as "Naomi Tighe" that I like best to recall Marie Wilton, though I do not say she has not placed far greater triumphs than that to her record.

Of the old Haymarket company, too, I retain vivid recollections. John Baldwin Buckstone, the best Bob Acres I ever saw—the Chippendales, husband and wife—was there ever a better Sir Anthony Absolute than "Old Chip"?—Kendal, as gallant and handsome a Captain Absolute as one could wish to see, Madge Robertson, Ione Burke, Caroline Hill—what a company it was! And how the provinces swore by them!

Buckstone I used to meet at the Café de l'Europe in the Haymarket, and also at the Waterloo Tavern not far off. His deafness was a bar to conversation—but when he was in a yarning mood, the dry humour with which he used to tell his piquant stories was inimitable. Here is one that I remember. The scene was the Far West. There had lately risen into fame an actor whose stage name was Harold Sharrockson. He was great in Shakespearean parts, and had specially "caught on" as "Hamlet" in the Western cities. At one of the latter he was billed to appear in his great rôle of the Prince of Denmark. His portrait, larger than life, was posted on every hoarding and blank wall of the city. Two canal boatmen looked at the picture, and resolved to see the play. They paid their money and went in. After the fourth scene was over, said one to the other:—

"Say, Pete, does this yer Hamlet remind yer of anybody?"

"How remind me?"

"Why of a chap you once knew."

" Nary cent."

" Wal, he does me. I guess, Pete, that it's our old mate on the canal boat—Jem Sarson, chap as used allays to be ravin' and rantin', and had a precious narrow shave o' getting his head knocked off—goin' under one o' the low bridges."

" Yer don't mean that ? "

" I do, and I'll bet you a dollar I prove it afore the play is over."

" I'll take yer."

" Wal', you watch and see."

When in the fifth scene, after his interview with the ghost, Hamlet soliloquizes and, raising his eyes, begins : " O all ye host of heaven "—a voice from the pit suddenly called out " Low bridge ! "—down went Hamlet's head with a quick duck. For a moment he looked wildly round, then recovering himself, continued his soliloquy. Nothing further happened till the great " To be or not to be " speech. Hamlet had just posed for that and uttered the first words when again from the pit came that mysterious call of " Low bridge ! " and down went Hamlet's head again with a most undignified duck. He glared round for a moment, with a look of mingled wrath and bewilderment on his face—but once more, with an effort, pulled himself together, and resumed his speech. There was no further interruption till Hamlet's interview with his Mother. He was bending over her, with his " Come, come and sit you down," when again from the pit came the ominous cry of " Low bridge ! "—down went Hamlet's head—he struck his forehead sharply against one of the spikes of the crown which the Queen still wore, his face was smothered in blood, as he rushed off the stage to the horror and amazement of the audience, who thought something tragic indeed had happened. But in an instant Hamlet was back—with a six-shooter in each hand—his eyes ablaze with rage.

" Look yar," he shouted levelling both pistols in the

direction from which the voice had proceeded, "thar's some derned fool tryin' to queer me. If he tries it again, I shall begin shootin' into the pit whar I guess he's sittin'. If I can't play, I can shoot some, you bet!"

"Yep, that's Jem Sarson," said Pete, and handed over his dollar.

The Haymarket, of course, recalls Sothern whom I knew personally, he was an intimate friend of Edmund Tattersall's of whom I saw a good deal during the seven years that I edited a well-known weekly journal of sport. Sothern was a very good fellow, when he was not in a practical-joking mood, but he was not a great actor. His success was a fluke and, apart from "Dundreary," with the possible exception of "David Garrick" he never made a real hit. But it cannot be denied that the hit he made in that rôle was extraordinary; I don't think that the true story of his sudden rise to fame has ever been fully told, and therefore I shall make no apology for giving it as I heard it from the lips of one who knew him well and was "behind the scenes" of his career. Sothern I may premise, was born on *April the First*, and he used to allege that fact as an excuse for his propensity to practical joking—to my thinking a detestable propensity in any man—the practical joke is the lowest and most barbaric form of humour, worthy only of savages and schoolboys. In 1858 Tom Taylor wrote to order a comedy for Joseph Jefferson, of Rip Van Winkle fame (one of the most accomplished actors of his own or any other day), called "Our American Cousin" in which that great comedian was to play the part of Asa Trenchard: among the characters was a small part of some forty-seven lines, a stupid English aristocratic swell named Lord Dundreary, which was cast to Edward Sothern. So insignificant was the part that he returned it to the prompter and declined to play it. Upon which he received a notification from the management (it was at Laura Keene's Theatre, New York) that he must either perform it or take his dismissal;

as the latter alternative did not suit him, he had to cave in. But he made no secret among his brother actors of his intention " to guy " the part throughout and render it so ridiculous that he would " queer the pitch " of everyone who was on the stage with him. The first night he played it with a stutter and a lisp, but so far from " queering " the scene, this interpretation seemed to please the audience hugely. A morning or two afterwards at rehearsal, the weather was so cold that Sothern began to hop and skip about the stage to warm himself.

" Do you intend to introduce that into Lord Dundreary ? " asked Laura Keene sarcastically.

Although the idea had not suggested itself to him before, Sothern answered promptly:

" Yes, madam, that is my idea of the part."

And on that night the famous hop and skip were added to the lisp and stutter and the audience roared. Every night Sothern added some fresh eccentricity, and as the public received each with increased relish, it was not for the management to object. Gradually this insignificant part began to overshadow all the rest, and to be the great attraction of the comedy, it was no longer Asa Trenchard that people went to see, but Lord Dundreary, and all New York was crowding to Laura Keene's to roar over this farcical caricature of the English aristocracy. Yet Sothern used to say that there was not one thing he did or said that he had not taken from life. And so Edward Sothern's fortune was made against his will, and in a part which he detested.

But when " Our American Cousin " came to London, and was produced at the Haymarket, Buckstone declared that there was " no money in it." The Press notices of Sothern were kindly and the piece had a six weeks' run of very moderate success till it was withdrawn for the pantomime, after which it was arranged that Sothern should return to the Haymarket. " But " said Buckstone as they parted, " Don't come back with that damned Lord Dundreary."

It was a black winter for the theatres, for the death of the Prince Consort had plunged London in mourning. Buckstone's pantomime was a dead failure—" Old Bucky," at his wits' end, announced the re-appearance of Sothern. " That damned Dundreary " was only to fill the gap till a new piece was ready. But there was no need for a new piece, for " Dundreary " took the town by storm. It ran 496 nights. The actor's fortune was made, and from that moment he had London at his feet.

But he never scored another success to match that, though his " David Garrick " was a fairly good second. In pieces like a " Hero of Romance," " Barwise's Book," " Home," " Brother Sam " and " The Favourite of Fortune," he was passable, though he could never quite keep " Dundreary " out of any of his rôles—there was always a *soupçon* of that nobleman's whiskers and stutter and eye-glass in all of them.

" Ned " Sothern was always genial and generous, his spirits were unflagging, and he burned the candle at both ends with a recklessness which brought its own Nemesis. I have known him drive down to Lord Rothschild's place at Tring, after leaving the theatre at midnight, be out with the staghounds at 10. a.m., hunt all day over the vale of Aylesbury, and just manage to get back to the Haymarket in time to play in the evening. He was passionately fond of hunting, and, if not a fine, was at any rate a most daring horseman. He was full of fun, which, as I have said, unfortunately too often took the abominable form of practical joking. Some of his practical jokes were cruel, I had almost said blackguardly, for they showed a wanton inconsiderateness for the feelings of others. Some were undoubtedly harmless and laughable. The rapid development of aviation recalls to me one which I don't think I have ever seen in print.

One morning the walls of New York were placarded with huge posters announcing that Signor Cantelabiglie

would, by the aid of an aerial machine, fly from Trinity Church steeple to the Battery and prove that road, rail, steam, every phase of locomotion in fact, would have to give place to the "grand highway of the air." So great was the sensation caused by this announcement that the Stock Exchange suspended its operations, and the members joined the countless thousands who flocked to see the extraordinary experiment. It was Sothern's birthday—the First of April! I need scarcely add that the crowd waited in vain for Cantelabiglie!

When Adelaide Neilson (most charming of Juliets) was playing in New York, she asked Sothern to give her some trifling souvenir before she departed.

"What would you like?" she asked.

"Oh! any trifle just for remembrance."

"Would you like a little live pet for a playmate?"

"Oh! yes; that would be delightful."

"All right, I'll send you one."

Later on the same day the little souvenir was brought to the popular actress's hotel. A message was sent to Miss Neilson to say that Mr. Sothern's present had arrived. She was entertaining a party of guests who had come to bid her farewell.

"Oh!" she said, turning to her friends, "it is the dear little pet that Mr. Sothern promised me as a souvenir —tell the man to bring it up."

I leave to the imagination of the reader the scene which ensued—when an immense black bear with chain and muzzle of terrific proportions and accompanied by four keepers made his appearance in the drawing-room!

Many stories, some of them not very creditable to him, are told of Sothern's spiritualistic exhibitions, his medium trances and the like. The following has, I think, the merit of never having been in print before. A friend of Sothern's, who had great faith in his own powers of mesmerism, begged the actor to let himself be mesmerized. Sothern agreed. He had not been many seconds under the influence when he suddenly

fell forward out of the chair in an apparently senseless state. The mesmeric passes were reversed—in vain—the seizure had evidently nothing to do with the mesmeric influence. A doctor was sent for, all the usual restoratives were applied, but though vitality was restored, with the full use of his limbs, there was no controlling power of mind—for whenever they tried to raise him, he developed an unaccountable savagery. He bit the finger of one man till he howled with pain—he bunged up the eye of another with a straight one from the shoulder, his feet all the while were flying about like a mad footballer's, inflicting severe bruises on whosesoever person they alighted. News was brought to the theatre that "Sothern was down in a fit," the acting manager rushed off to Sothern's house in Vere Street, Oxford Street, and arrived in a terrible stew. It was getting on for seven, the hour at which the performance was to begin. Sothern had sunk from violent frenzy into a state of coma; water, brandy, ice—all were tried, but nothing would revive him. The acting-manager looked at his watch and in a tone of agony said:—

"My God! this is awful! There is nothing else to be done, I must hurry down to the house and dismiss the audience—they were clamouring about the doors in hundreds when I came. Yes! I must be off."

Then suddenly Sothern raised his head, opened his eyes and pointing to his mesmerizing friend, said with the Dundreary look and stutter:—

"Do—on't you th—think that a f—fellow who makes me get up an epileptic fit w—without s—supplying m—me with s—soap to foam at the m—mouth is a d—damned ass?"

The pace he lived at soon told its tale. When he came back from America in 1880 he was so broken down, so utterly changed in appearance that even those who had known him well did not recognise him. He died on the 21st January, 1881, in his 55th year. The

last time I was at Southampton I paid a pilgrimage to his grave in the cemetery there, marked by a handsome white marble cross.

I have mentioned Adelaide Neilson in connection with Sothern. She was a beautiful woman and an actress full of fire and passion. Her "Juliet" was far away the best I ever saw. She seemed to have the true Southern temperament which enabled her to play the part as few of our cold-blooded Northern women have the power to do. Whence came those lustrous Southern eyes and that passionate Southern abandonment? They consorted incongruously with her homely English name, Elizabeth Ann Brown, and the sordid surroundings of a Yorkshire mill-hand. But romance came into her life and transformed it. Men about Town who frequented two well-known houses of entertainment in the sixties remembered a dark slip of a girl with wonderful black eyes, who used to mount an improvised rostrum and declaim passages from Shakespeare with striking dramatic fervour and expression. There an alert entrepreneur saw her, recognised her histrionic power, and felt that it would be a sin to let such dramatic talent be wasted in this unorthodox fashion. The result was that Elizabeth Ann Brown blossomed into Adelaide Neilson and under that attractive pseudonym was suddenly sprung upon the Town as a new star, if not of the first magnitude, at any rate brilliant and dazzling enough to shed a fresh lustre on the London stage.

Adelaide Neilson had humour, too, at any rate off the stage. She once gave me the following among other humorous incidents in her career, when I asked for some of her experiences on her return from the States:—

"I remember once playing in Dublin. It was in 'Juliet,' in the death scene; when I seized the dagger and stabbed myself, a very excited Irishman in the pit, overcome with sympathy and terror shrieked, 'Oh! Jim, she's done it!' I was so convulsed with laughter

that I could only get up a giggle for the death struggle. And again I was playing Pauline in 'The Lady of Lyons' with a weak Claude. He had been sick and was unstrung, so I told him when I rushed to him I would clasp my arms round him, and he must give way a little. I flew to his embrace and he gave way indeed, and down on the floor we both went together, entangled in my train. We gathered ourselves up as best we could, and I caught him again with fervour, and the audience tried to stifle their laughter, when Claude's next words brought down the house: 'This is the heaviest blow of all!' Of course we had the laugh out then.

"But the most awkward accident happened to me once in a provincial theatre, where the scenic arrangements were most meagre. We had a kitchen for the ball-room (the play was Romeo and Juliet), and the tomb was set in the midst of the garden shrubbery. I said:—'That will never do. Bring me some drapery and I will shut off the shrubbery.' So I was mounted on the top of the tomb, and was engaged in pinning up the improvised partition, when up went the curtain, and Juliet, who should have been quietly sleeping with the Capulets, was caught in that very practical employment!"

I remember witnessing a somewhat similiar incident at Sadler's Wells. The play was "King John," and Falconbridge, the Bastard, was just commencing his famous soliloquy at the close of the first act, when the scene shifter by some mistake, imagining the curtain to be down, suddenly removed the back scene-piece, and revealed three carpenters discussing a pot of half and half in friendly circle. A roar of laughter greeted the revelation, which quite disconcerted poor Falconbridge, who was unaware of the impromptu comedy being acted behind him. The hasty exit of the carpenters, on finding themselves the cynosure of all eyes, was a delightful piece of unrehearsed comedy, which some thought the most natural piece of acting in the play.

Fanny Kemble once had an experience in "Juliet"

not unlike Adelaide Neilson's. It was at Philadelphia. She had just given the lines :—

"What's here? a cup closed in my true love's hand?

"Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end—"

when a tall, lean, gaunt medical student in the stage-box, thrust down his hat on his head with a convulsive effort, crying out in a voice of thunder at the same time: "Keep him up Juliet, I'll run and fetch a stomach pump."

The most comical of the unrehearsed scenes I have myself witnessed, occurred at the Globe Theatre in connection with the production of a play which had what must have been, I think, the shortest run on record. A member of the aristocracy, now deceased, had taken the theatre for his *chère amie*, a very fine-looking handsome woman, who had a mistaken idea that she was an actress. Her protector not only took the theatre, but wrote the play in which she was to act the leading part. It was the most pitiable fiasco I ever witnessed. The piece was utter trash, and the leading lady made it worse by her abominable acting. When the gallery "guyed" her she lost her temper and answered them back, which did not tend to improve the prospects of the piece. One of the scenes represented a woodland glade. She appeared, carrying a small dog in her arms, which she presently set down. Her pet wandered to one of the painted tree trunks—and—well I draw a veil over what followed. Suffice it to say that there was a roar of laughter from pit and gallery, and even the stalls were shaken with spasms of half suppressed cachinnation. I never heard such a spontaneous burst of merriment in any theatre. And when the curtain at last fell amid a storm of hoots and jeers, there arose derisive calls for the "Leetle dawg," "the most nat'ral actor in the whole company." The play was produced again on the Monday and then withdrawn. A run of two nights!!

The worst of this recollection business is that when

one gets to the stage, one does not know where to leave off. When one thinks of all the actors and actresses one has seen and known over a period of five and forty years, one is loth to pass any of them by without mention. And yet if I were to give the reins to my memory, I should find my theatrical recollections absorbing the rest of my book. What a gallery of charming actresses rise before me as I look back—their figures crowd upon me—I make no attempt to discriminate or give precedence—Mrs. Herman Vezin, Miss Heath, Lydia Foote, Miss Furtado, Nellie Farren, Ada Cavendish, Henrietta Hodson, Madge Robertson (how different from the austere Mrs. Kendall!), Ellen Terry (the most universally popular, probably, of them all), Carlotta Addison, Mary Anderson, Mrs. Alfred Wigan, Mrs. Bernard Beere, Mrs. John Wood, of whose *espièglerie* I retain the liveliest and most delightful recollections, and I know not how many more, are all clamouring for recognition. But with a sigh I dismiss them, to await, perhaps, some more convenient season.

Then there are a host of actors, too, whom I have known, and who for similiar reasons must be allowed to go with the briefest of mention. Alfred Wigan, polished and perfect delineator of 18th century comedy, and not less great in his famous character-sketch of the French conjuror. Barry Sullivan, the idol of the provinces, soundest of actors and—heaviest. I never met a more portentously ponderous person. Herman Vezin, precisian to the finger-tips, imperishably associated with "The Man o' Airlie," the only part in which he ever really let himself go. George Vining, the inimitable Count Fosco. Charles Calvert, the adored of Manchester playgoers, whom he first taught to appreciate Shakespeare, famous for his marvellous stage whisper, the finest in living memory, and proud possessor of a noble arm which he loved to display in toga parts. Charles Mathews, the evergreen "agreeable Rattle" of light comedy, whose "Patter versus Clatter" makes strange

music in my ear even now. "Lal" Brough, raciest of Tony Lumpkinses, creepiest of stage dipsomaniacs (his wonderful impersonation of Uncle Ben in "Dearer than Life" haunts me like a ghost), driest and drollest of raconteurs, the beloved of all Bohemians. Walter Lacy, Prince of Mercutios, but of him one fleeting, characteristic glimpse must be allowed the reader. He is seated in the Albion, about to order dinner; at his elbow is the attentive and expectant waiter. Walter has one little weakness, it is his histrionic dietary, on which he sets great store, and has no objection to letting the world into his confidence in a stage "aside,"—he rests his brow upon his hand and thinks aloud—"Let me see—to-night, Mer-cutio—the diet must be light—a sole, William."

"Yes—sir."

"Fried, William."

"Yes—sir."

"And—and—Mer-cutio—Yes—and boiled chicken, William."

"Yes—sir."

"And—let me see—Mer-cutio—yes—and a pint of Chablis, William."

"Yes—sir." And William departs.

Another night the viands are altered—*coram publico*—to suit another rôle, for every character a distinct and separate menu. But one forgives the little vanity as one recalls the most airy, graceful, delightful of Mercutios.

Of Charles Dillon I have more to say, for I not only knew him, but have heard much of him from a dead friend of mine and his. Here was an actor of something like genius who ruined all his chances and never gave his great talents fair play. I don't think I have ever seen an uglier man on or off the boards than Charles Dillon. A contemporary of his on the stage thus described him when, as a young man of twenty-one, he appeared at the Marylebone Theatre in the old "dog drama," the *Forest of Bondy*. "Aubrey," says the the writer, "was played by an abnormally ugly young man, with a huge

cavernous mouth, and protruding irregular teeth, a corrugated nose, small, piggy, glittering eyes, long, lank, black hair, growing so low down on a broad but receding forehead that a certain margin of hair, leaving a blue-black mark, had to be shaven off, to give any semblance of a brow. But before he had been on the stage five minutes, I lost sight of his plebeian appearance in his pathos and passion which were alike admirable." In after years, when I knew him, the abnormal ugliness was considerably modified by a large moustache which effectually hid the mouth and teeth, but, even then, he was, as I have said, one of the ugliest of men, and essentially plebeian. But you forgot all that when you saw him in "Belphegor, the mountebank," a play translated from the French of Dennery and Mark Fournier. That was his great part, and he was splendid in it. I doubt whether any finer performance, under the range of high tragedy, was ever seen upon any stage, French or English, than Dillon's Belphegor. The fire, the pathos, the *abandon*, the picturesqueness, the power of it electrified Londoners when it was first produced at Sadler's Wells in 1855, with Marie Wilton as the heroine, Madeline, and Toole also in the caste. John Oxenford, the brilliant and scholarly dramatic critic of the "Times," pronounced it to be the most striking piece of acting he had ever seen, and the Town went mad over it. Never were playgoers more deeply moved. The sobbing of men and women was heard all over the house—the thrill of enthusiasm and sympathy seemed to lift people out of themselves. Dillon was past his prime and his frame was shattered by dissipation when I saw him act Belphegor, but even then he stirred me as hardly any other actor has had power to stir me.

He was the most careless, happy-go-lucky of men. Never so happy as when he had a congenial crowd of convivialists around him at the tavern, standing drinks all round, and flinging away his money faster than he earned it. Yet his power of work was stupendous. In

the provinces he would perform in three pieces in a night, and I have seen an old Wolverhampton play-bill in which he is announced to appear in one evening in "The Stranger," "The Iron Chest," and "Macbeth"!!

There was a time when he had the ball at his feet, and might have taken as high a place on the stage as any actor of his day. But he had no ballast. He would hurry from the theatre to the tavern, sit up all night and half the next day boozing with his pals—dress hurriedly at the last moment, and then repeat the same performance the next night. Though he lived in no style, beyond keeping a plain brougham, the money he made—and his takings were very large at one time—ran through his fingers like water through a sieve. Of his adventures in the Wild West, in California and Nevada, I have no space to tell. He wandered all over the world. Charley Wilmot, sometime lessee of the "Grand," Islington, told me many stories of his recklessness out in Australia. Here is one characteristic specimen: Wilmot was at that time manager of the theatre at Brisbane, and had engaged Dillon. He was to open in Sheridan Knowles' "Virginius," but when the time for commencement came, it was discovered that Dillon was not in the theatre; search was made for him, and he was at length unearthed at a neighbouring bar, drinking with an old London pal, whom he had unexpectedly stumbled upon, and with whom he was exchanging reminiscences. It was in vain that Wilmot kept urging upon him that the audience was growing impatient, all he could get from Dillon was:—"Have a drink, old fellow, and damn the audience; there's not many in yet, I've just been counting 'em."

Then at last reluctantly he let himself be dragged to his dressing room.

"Now my dear," he said to his wife, "Where's the 'props'"?

"I haven't an idea," said she, "unless you left 'em at the last town."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Dillon, "I forgot all about 'em."

Then turning to Wilmot he remarked coolly:—

"Well, I can't go on without 'props': you must dismiss the house, old man, and we'll make a night of it."

By this time there was every prospect of a splendid house. In an agony of desperation the manager stripped a super of his costume, "fleshings" and sandals included, then ran home and snatched the sheet off his bed to serve for a Roman toga: thus equipped, and groggy to boot, did Charles Dillon present himself to the house as the noble Roman Virginius. At first they were disposed to "guy" him, but he pulled himself together, shook off the fumes of drink, and by such acting as amazed Charles Wilmot, worked the audience into frantic enthusiasm before he had done with them.

That sort of thing marked his chequered career to the end, intermittent flashes of genius, alternated with terrible fiascos, when he was either unable to appear at all, or in such a condition as only to move pity and disgust.

The late Mr. James Guiver, whom I can hardly bring myself to write of otherwise than as "Jem" Guiver, was a firm believer in Dillon, thought him the greatest actor living and opened a season at the Princess's Theatre with "Manfred," Dillon of course taking the title rôle. How Jem Guiver could ever have thought that Byron's gloomy dramatic poem would draw, is a mystery to me. It is true that Phelps had by his fine acting made the play a success; but Phelps and Dillon were birds of a very different feather. I had the O.P. stage-box on the first night, and it was the most awful first-night experience I ever had. Everything went wrong, and from my unfortunate point of vantage I could see and hear every contretemps before and behind the scenes. When the water-fall showed a stubborn disinclination to move and persistently clung to the roller,

I was painfully conscious of half-a-dozen grimy pairs of hands hauling at it vigorously and rending it into shreds in their frantic efforts to make it flow with some distant resemblance to nature. When the Spirit-King stood motionless, though evidently longing to advance towards the prostrate figure of the dying hero, it was forced upon my notice that his ethereal garments had been caught in the trap door, and that Manfred was raising his head and muttering in deep sotto-voce, " Why the devil don't you come on ? " and my ears had been previously mournful witnesses to the fact that in the midst of an impassioned speech, Manfred turned his angry eyes upon the wings and said in a very audible aside, " Can't you stop that blasted noise there ? " Carpenters, scene-shifters, ropes and pulleys were in evidence all through the dreary performance, and, to add to my discomfiture, Charles Dillon did me the honour to concentrate his gaze so exclusively upon me at a distance of five paces, with a vindictive glare, indicative of a desire to have my blood, as the one cause of all these exasperating mishaps, that I was heartily glad when the curtain fell. I had no wish to see Dillon in " Manfred " again. It was, I think, the worst performance I ever had the misfortune to witness on the stage.

The last time I saw him was at Hull. I was on a lecturing tour, and had a night off. Dillon was billed to play " Hamlet." It was just at the time that Irving was playing that part at the Lyceum, and I was curious to compare the old style and the new. Dillon's was a pitiable performance. He could hardly stand without the support of an actor on either side of him. His voice was thick and husky, his face red and swollen, yet now and then there suddenly leapt up a flickering flame of the old fire which the indulgent audience hailed with enthusiasm. I never saw him either on or off the stage after that. His end was tragically sudden. He was wandering about the country with a small company and what was known then as a " fit up," sticking mostly to

the North where he had been enormously popular and where his name could draw to the last, for he often acted so finely as to recall his best days. He had arrived at the little border town of Hawick, and so well did he act on the opening night, that there was every prospect of a good week. The next morning, after going the round of the public houses with some members of his company, he was strolling down the high street, making his companions roar with his droll stories, when suddenly—in the middle of a racy anecdote—he stopped short, and putting his hand to his head, exclaimed, " O ! God, can this be death ! " For a moment he stood speechless and motionless, then fell forward on his face. When his companions raised him, he was dead.

The public was exceedingly tolerant to its stage favourites in those days. It is impossible to conceive nowadays of any actor daring to show his face behind the footlights if he had even once been guilty of such gross improprieties as Charles Dillon, and Gustavus Vasa Brook, another brilliant actor of undeniable genius and woefully erratic habits. Both of them, times without number, appeared on the stage so intoxicated as to be unable to stand or speak. Yet the public overlooked the offence, for much was forgiven to genius then. We have changed all that for the better. Both the public and the players have too much respect for themselves and for each other to allow such scenes to be ever again possible on the boards.

Dion Boucicault I must not pass over in silence, for my memory teems with recollections of him, both as a player and play-wright. In the latter connection he was the most prolific and versatile dramatist of his time. His admirers called him the " 19th century Shakespeare," and he did not consider that there was anything extravagant in the designation. " London Assurance," " Colleen Bawn," " Flying Scud," " After Dark," and a hundred other successful dramas made him *persona grata* to play-goers in both Hemispheres. It is not with

any of these triumphs, however, that he is most vividly associated in my memory. His name always brings back to me his wonderful drama, "Formosa," produced at Drury Lane by F. B. Chatterton, in defiance of all stage traditions, in *the month of August*, when it was then the ridiculous fashion to regard London as "empty" —the fore-runner of those autumn plays which have made "Old Drury" famous.

"Formosa" provoked a storm of controversy on the score of its morality—or immorality. Its heroine was a Queen of the demi-monde—or to put it more plainly, a beautiful and notorious courtesan, and the scene was largely laid at her villa in Fulham, whither flocks of "soiled doves" congregated. With the morals of "Formosa" I am not concerned, *they* would excite little comment in these advanced days. But I will just mention one or two of the episodes of the play, and ask what the public would think of having such rubbish palmed off on them nowadays, as a picture of current life and manners. The Oxford and Cambridge boat-race figured largely in the play, the Dark Blues were represented as training under a prize-fighter, and on wet days, instead of turning out in the boat, taking exercise in a covered shed, sitting cross-legged on a series of trestles, and working a dummy show of oars. After this severe athletic exertion, they refreshed themselves with quart pots of shandy-gaff! The villains of the piece have betted heavily on Cambridge—consequently two days before the race the Oxford stroke is kidnapped by bailiffs and carried off to a spongeing-house in Chancery Lane. But on the very eve of the race, a strong posse of pugilists led by Sam Boker, the trainer of the Dark Blues, storm the spongeing-house and liberate the stroke, who gets down to Putney just in time to take his seat at the thwart and stroke Oxford to victory, to the utter discomfiture of the villains! Think of the sublime impudence of a play-wright who could foist such a grotesque caricature of the 'Varsity Race on the

public as a serious dramatic episode! He had never troubled himself to see the Race or learn anything whatever about the simplest details of training, yet he had the cheek to put such rot as that on the stage of what was then London's leading theatre! That is not the way things are done nowadays at Old Drury. Think of Mr. Arthur Collins's feelings if a dramatist offered him such a drama as "Formosa!" Yes, Mr. Collins, "The Whip" shows in many ways how enormously stage management has advanced since the days of Dion Boucicault, "the 19th Century Shakespeare." It was in defending himself against the charges brought against him in connection with the moral tone and dramatic merit of "Formosa" that F. B. Chatterton used the memorable phrase that "Shakespeare spelt ruin and Byron bankruptcy." Sir Herbert Tree would hardly endorse that statement as regards Shakespeare, but I don't think that even he would have the courage to put "Manfred" on the boards.

The chief villain in "Formosa," Major Kerr, was played by Henry Irving, who was then generally cast for such parts. On the opening night of the Gaiety, I had that eminent histrion as my next neighbour in the front row of the balcony stalls. I had met him not very long before when he was playing Bob Gassitt in "The Lancashire Lass" at the Queen's Theatre. He was now out of a berth, and we had drinks and a chat together between the acts. I did not have a chance of speaking to him again for nearly thirty years. I was staying at Winchelsea in 1896. One night I went to the Look-Out which commands a fine view of the marshes and the sea, with the flashing lights of Dungeness, and sometimes of Cape Gris Nez, punctuating the darkness. In the far corner of the Look-Out I saw the glow of a cigar, and presently a familiar voice said:—

"The lights of Cape Gris Nez are particularly brilliant to-night."

We got into conversation and I recalled to him the

incident of our sitting together at the opening night of the Gaiety and witnessing Alfred Wigan's performance in "On the Cards," and W. S. Gilbert's burlesque "Robert the Devil." He remembered the occasion, but had forgotten *me*, which was not surprising. But what a leap from the impecunious, unemployed mummer of 1869 to the leader of the English stage in 1896! With all the blushing honours of his Knighthood thick upon him! Yet no one grudged him his success. He was the one successful actor I have known whose triumphs provoked no jealousy or malicious detraction among the members of his own profession—a profession in which there is seldom much love lost between its successful and unsuccessful members. I never heard any actor say a disparaging word of Henry Irving.

I referred in a previous section to the notorious Edward Tyrrell Smith as one of the most extraordinary men of his day and hinted that I had some curious stories to tell about him. It is only fitting that I should bring him in here in writing of Drury Lane because it is as the saviour of "Old Drury" that he has the best claim to be remembered. He came of good stock. His father was an admiral and had fought with distinction under those two great seamen Rodney and Howe. Edward was intended for the sea and his adventurous and daring spirit seemed to mark him as born to be a sailor. His father's interest procured him a nomination as a midshipman and he left home to join his ship at Chatham. But he was unfortunately his mother's pet, and no sooner had she parted from him, with floods of tears, than she found herself distracted with terror at the terrible dangers she was sending him out to face. She promptly ordered a postchaise, pursued her darling boy, brought him back and thereby ruined his prospects for life. For as she could never make up her mind to let him out of her sight, he grew up in idleness at his father's house which was always full of company, among whom actors figured largely. When it was absolutely

necessary that he should earn his living, a berth in the Constabulary was all that was offered him. He took it, but soon abandoned it for the even less dignified calling of a bum-bailiff or sheriff's auctioneer. But he was a youth of ready wit, with a determination to get on in the world and he certainly succeeded, though in a queer, crooked way, which, if effective and original, was not always above suspicion.

There was hardly any kind of speculation in which he did not dabble and in order that he might seem to be always in funds he found it worth his while to hire daily at the rate of £1 per diem, a thousand pound note which was obligingly entrusted to him by a well-known money-lender, Sam Genese, whose son, inheriting the name and business of his sire, I knew well, and indeed, it is to him that I am indebted for most of these incidents in E. T. Smith's career. That thousand pound note enabled him to make purchases on credit which without deposit money he would have had no chance of effecting. Attending sales he would buy whatever happened to suit him, with a view to immediate re-sale, offering his thousand pound note in payment. Of course, it could not be changed, but he got the article for which he bid knocked down to him all the same. Then he would re-sell it and pocket the difference. The mere exhibition of that note secured him a certain amount of credit, and he was not likely ever to meet with an auctioneer able to change it. Before offering his, or rather Genese's note, he took care to write his name on the back of it. Afterwards his usurious friend would replace the note that had been endorsed by a brand new one, and occasions presented themselves on which it was a distinct advantage for E. T. Smith to be known as a gentleman who in a comparatively short space of time had inscribed his name on several bank notes, each for £1,000. Once, when St. Dunstan's villa, in Regent's Park, was knocked down to Smith for £10,000, the £1,000 note which he had as usual in his waistcoat pocket, was just what was

wanted to satisfy the auctioneer's demands. Here E. T. Smith was seemingly in a dilemma; but he was equal to the occasion, observing, as he handed up the flimsy, that he would turn the place into a second Cremorne Gardens, in which character it would not fail to attract thousands of people and bring in lots of money. At this announcement the auctioneer drew back, informing the apparently eager purchaser that the house could be converted to no such purpose. Whereupon E. T. Smith, in apparent disgust, pocketed his note again and saved the situation. He had been mixed up in many and divers speculations of dubious success when he made his first grand coup by becoming lessee of Drury Lane. The old play house had fallen on evil days. It seemed as if Sam Johnson's gloomy prophecy in his famous Prologue, spoken by David Garrick on the opening of the theatre in 1747, were destined to be fulfilled.

> "But who the coming changes can presage
> And mark the future periods of the stage?
> Perhaps if skill could distant times explore
> New Behns, new D'Urfeys yet remain in store.
> Perhaps where Lear has raved and Hamlet died
> On flying cars new sorcerers may ride!
> Perhaps (for who can guess the effects of chance?)
> Here Hunt may box or Mahomet may dance."

To all these degradations "Old Drury" had been subjected—it had sunk to its lowest ebb—everything had been tried—opera, drama, circus, wild-beast show—but all had failed and Manager after Manager had retired ruined. No tenant could be found for it, and the Duke of Bedford had serious intentions of pulling it down, and turning the ground to other purposes. Pickford's had been in treaty to convert it into a Van and Parcel Depot, and there had been plans drawn up to transform it into a brewery; but these and others all fell through, and speculative Mr. Smith not only conceived the daring idea of venturing upon the forlorn hope,

but actually found friends to back him. The rent paid by Elliston thirty years previously had been £10,000 a year; Smith now obtained it for £3,500. The most dismal prophecies of failure were uttered. Some people gave him a fortnight; others more liberal, made it a season. He opened in the December of 1852 with a dramatic version of "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*"—then in the very height of its *furore*—and a pantomime; made a prodigious success, and through good and evil fortune continued to be Manager until 1862.

By his pluck and enterprise E. T. Smith unquestionably saved Drury Lane Theatre from ignominious extinction and though it has seen some changes of fortune since and passed through some perilous crises it has never been in such dire straits or threatened with such a humiliating collapse as when E. T. Smith came to its rescue. It was the most creditable act in all the man's chequered career and, perhaps, the only one for which he deserves to be remembered.

One day it occurred to Mr. Smith that he had never yet tried his hand at Italian opera. English opera he had given at Drury Lane, and as her Majesty's Theatre was then (1860) in the market, in consequence of Lumley's bankruptcy, he forthwith determined to add that to his other experiments; but as he knew nothing about the business, he applied to Mapleson (who had formerly been a tenor singer, but, having lost his voice, had started a musical agency), offering to find the money if Mapleson would supply the knowledge. The manner in which Smith negotiated with Lumley for the lease of Her Majesty's Theatre, was eminently characteristic and unconventional. Lumley at that time was living in the modern sanctuary of English debtors, Boulogne, and thither the two repaired to settle the business. Lumley had prepared a splendid banquet for his visitors, with the choicest wines and plenty of them on the table; the host plied E. T. Smith with champagne, and he, nothing loth, emptied the bottles with the most

exemplary regularity, while Lumley drank only water; it was four o'clock in the morning before the parties really got to business, nearly six before they agreed to terms, Smith undertaking to pay £16,000 for the services of the singers. When at length all the papers were signed and sealed, stamps affixed to the bills for payment, etc., and they were quitting the banquetting room, Smith caught sight of half a bottle of champagne. "Stop a bit," he said, "it's better to finish this, the servants will only get hold of it and get drunk!"

But he led Mapleson an awful life, for he snapped his fingers at Mrs. Grundy and, as the little episode I have already related in connexion with Mabel Grey amply proved, did not care how he shocked conventional notions of propriety. He had the most extraordinary ideas of conducting an opera house. After the memorable international prize fight between Sayers and Heenan, at which he was present, he made the two men promise to attend the opera the following evening, then, posting up to London, rushed round to the newspaper offices to insert advertisements of the *unique attraction!*

Finally he sought out his Manager, Mapleson, and told him in high glee of his great *coup!* Mapleson was horrified. That Titiens, Giuglini, Alboni, should be insulted by having two prize-fighters brought on the stage to share with them the plaudits of the audience was sacrilege. He prayed so earnestly that the advertisements might be withdrawn that Smith at last reluctantly consented to do so.

"But the lads will be here," he said, "and everybody knows they will."

Next day he himself superintended the preparation of one of the best private boxes in the grand tier, and there, at night, were seated the two illustrious heroes. The news had spread like wild-fire through London, the cheaper parts of the house were crowded to suffocation, and as soon as the somewhat damaged "mugs" of the pugilists were recognised, a cry went up of "There

they are!" and then there was a cheer such as those walls had never heard before, that made the drops in the great chandelier shiver and jingle as though a tempest had swept through them, followed by another and another, as the champions rose and bowed their acknowledgements. Altogether, it was about the queerest scene that had ever been witnessed in an opera house. As to music or singers, nobody cared a jot about them!

Not less eccentric had been Smith's behaviour when a couple of years previously, he had produced Italian opera at Drury Lane. "Don Giovanni" was played with a splendid caste—Viardot, Persiani, Rudersdorf, Naudin; it was the last night of the season and the entrepreneur's benefit. To add a popular element to the bill, Mozart's masterpiece was supplemented by Dibdin's "Waterman," Charles Braham appearing as Tom Tug. So far so good; but this was too prosaic for our showman, so he had a new song written in praise of the Board of Works, who had befriended him—doubtless for a consideration—on several occasions! And the song was sung too!

Like Dryden's Zimri, E. T. Smith "was everything by starts and nothing long." Some idea of the variety of his speculations may be gathered from the fact that he was, at one and the same time, lessee of Drury Lane, Her Majesty's, The Alhambra and a travelling circus—a wine merchant—the landlord of four large taverns (The Radnor in Chancery Lane was one of them)—an auctioneer—a picture dealer—a land agent—a bill discounter—and the proprietor of a newspaper, "The Sunday Times"!! He was ubiquitous, you ran up against him everywhere—at the theatre—on the Stock Exchange, on the race course, at the Ring side. Everyone who went about town at all five and forty years ago must have come across E. T. Smith at some time and in some queer place. He was very well known to an intimate friend of mine and I often met him—two or three times I had the privilege of supping with him at

Cremorne. It was he who brought out Adah Isaacs Menken as "Mazeppa" at Astley's Circus and made her the talk of the town and the biggest theatrical success of the time. When I knew him he was "boss" of Cremorne, the Lyceum and the Surrey. Then he went into the metal trade and if there were anything else left in the world for him to dabble in he would have had a finger in it had not Clotho cut his thread. He died at Oval House, Kennington Park, on November 26th, 1870. He was only 64, but he had crammed into that space as much life as would suffice for three common centenarians. He was not what you would call a highly moral character, but he was generous and had the great, and not too common, virtue of sticking to his friends. He helped a good many lame dogs over stiles in his day and for that he deserves a word of commendation. Few, I suppose, even remember his name now—but he bulks so big in my recollection, as one of the most remarkable men I ever met, that I do not grudge him the space I have given him and I hope my readers will be equally indulgent.

At an earlier stage of these recollections, I alluded to a curious dramatic experiment of J. C. M. Bellew's. He gave a representation of "Hamlet" at St. George's Hall, Langham Place, in which all the parts were represented in dumb show by performers on the stage, whilst he, concealed in the orchestra, rendered the speeches. The effect was rather grotesque, for it was not always possible for the actors to time their gestures exactly with Bellew's reading. But the presenter of Hamlet stands out in my memory as peculiarly graceful and effective in pose and gesture. He wore a fair wig, *à* la Fechter, and *looked* an ideal Hamlet. If his speech had been equal to his appearance and action, he would have made his mark on the stage. I have forgotten his name, and do not know whether he ever cut any sort of a figure in speaking parts. Bellew's bizarre experiment was not a success, though he was, on the whole, the

finest elocutionist I ever heard. Brandram was a subtler delineator of character, and in his recitals of complete Shakespearean plays was unmatched—they were wonderful interpretations of Shakespeare. Clifford Harrison in a delicate, refined way could produce an effect more emotional, but neither of them had a voice to compare with Bellew's magnificent organ in volume, range or melody ; he could roll it out like thunder, make it ring like a clarion, or let it flow in low and liquid music. It was equally effective in comedy and tragedy. He was best, perhaps, in his robuster methods. He could render such pieces as " Horatius," or Henry the Fifth's address on the eve of Agincourt with a magnificent fire which carried you away. I remember one memorable instance of his power over an audience. It was at the Alexandra Hall, Blackheath. The room was packed, but the audience was cold and hostile. For some reason, which I forget, Bellew had given them offence, he had either failed to turn up or cancelled an engagement, or something of that sort. At any rate they were determined to punish him. His first piece was received in stony silence. Not the faintest sound of applause greeted him at the finish. The hall might have been empty for all the noise there was. When he came forward again, he said quietly :—

" I propose to make a slight change in the programme. I shall give next the piece which is set down as No. 2 in the second part of my programme."

The piece was " Sheridan's Ride " by Thomas Buchanan Reid. It describes how Phil Sheridan, the famous Federal General, heard the booming of the guns at Winchester, when he was twenty miles away, how he dashed out for the fray on his renowned black steed, how the miles fell away before his strenuous gallop, how he came up with his men, beaten and retreating, and led them back to victory. I have never heard anything delivered with such magnificent fire and spirit as Bellew threw into " Sheridan's Ride " that night. He swept all

before him, conquered all the coldness and hostility, and, when he ended, the Hall rang with long-sustained and enthusiastic plaudits, such as I should think never greeted his gratified ears before.

Bellew's appearance, his fine figure, his bold, smooth, expressive face, his splendid mass of snow-white hair, gave great dignity and impressiveness to his readings.

And now it is time that I should let the curtain fall upon my recollections of the theatre. It will be gathered that I have seen great changes on the stage. When I came up to London first, there were only fourteen West-End Theatres, all told—there are now close upon forty, besides a host of admirable suburban houses. The play-going public has not only increased proportionately in numbers, but it embraces a far wider clientèle. The lower middle class and the proletariat were the main supporters of the theatre in my early London days. The aristocracy and upper middle-class looked upon the play house with a condescension not unmixed with contempt. Society only patronized the mummers in a fitful and half-hearted manner. Now the stage caters for and appeals to all classes. There are plays and play-houses to suit all tastes, and the theatre is admitted to be an absolute necessity of modern life. As a consequence the general tone both of plays and players has been elevated in a very remarkable degree. The stage supplies intellectual entertainment which commands the respect of the thoughtful and serious, and can no longer be reproached with providing pabulum only for the frivolous—though the latter cannot complain that they are left out in the cold. The foolish have as much right to have their tastes considered, as the wise, and as they are much the larger section of Society, there will always be a preponderance of silliness on the play-bills. But if Folly spreads an alluring table for those who love her—Wisdom can tolerate her presence now that the drama gives *her* temples of her own to worship in.

I do not say that there are any actors now on the

boards who surpass or even equal the great masters of the past. It is the same with the stage as with literature. We have a very high standard of mediocrity, but no genius. Plays are far better staged and acted all round now, than they were forty years ago—though there may be no stars of the first magnitude. There is a finish and polish about the actors of to-day, even in the smallest parts, which was quite lacking in my early experience—though the two most finished and polished English actors I have ever known—Sir Charles Wyndham and Sir John Hare—belong almost as much to the past as to the present, and the former still sets the mirror to the rising generation of histrions. If our stage cannot show the power and passion of Macready or Kean, it can and does reflect some of the exquisite subtlety and delicacy of Coquelin and the Comèdie Francaise.

And as I have shown already, the social position of the player has been raised conspicuously. Yet there still lingers in some out of the way districts, the old distrust of the actor's respectability. An instance of this came under my own notice not a year ago in the part of Sussex in which I live. Our Vicar had written a clever little comedy in which I, in company with a few friends, took part. It was so successful in the village that we were asked to repeat the performance for a charitable object in the neighbouring town. The Forester's Hall was engaged—the Vicar, who was our stage manager, interviewed the caretaker's wife as to the necessary arrangements.

"You will, of course, provide soap and towels in the dressing-rooms," he said.

The woman replied hesitatingly :—

"Well! yes, sir—if you will be responsible for them, not otherwise, for you see these theatrical people are not always to be trusted!"

Old-time Victorian prejudices die hard—at any rate in Sussex.

VIII

Tavern Hours

"Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?"

Thus John Keats who, though he was no tavern-haunter himself—Fate cut short his thread too soon for that—was in true sympathy with the old tradition which for centuries has linked literature with the tavern. If it be a sin to have patronized the tavern, then we—who did so in my hot youth—may plead that we sinned in good company. We can go back beyond Dan Chaucer for precedents. That great Welshman, Walter de Map, the intimate friend of Becket, wit, satirist, poet, bon-vivant, shows us that the jovial monks of his day were not ashamed of their love of the tavern—in witness whereof take the immortal drinking song of his "Bishop Golias" "Meum est propositum in tabernâ mori:"

"'Tis my firm resolve to die
In a tavern lying,
Wine into my thirsty mouth
Kindest hands supplying.
So shall angels come to me,
Holy angels, crying
'God have mercy on his soul,
'Tis the drunkard dying.'"

Then there were the heroic Elizabethans—Shakespeare and his convives at the Falcon, Bankside, Southwark, hard by the Globe Theatre, or at the Devil Tavern in Fleet Street, with its famous "Apollo Room." And

those hostelries, sacred to the Muses, which Robert Herrick, sweetest and gayest of lyrists, has immortalized, where rare Ben Jonson was master of the revels :

"Ah ! Ben !
Say how or when
Shall we thy guests
Meet at those lyric feasts
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the Triple Tun ?
Where we such clusters had,
As made us nobly wild, not mad ;
And yet each verse of thine
Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine."

And how many taverns did not the great and learned and pious Dr. Samuel Johnson—pillar of true religion and sound morality—honour with his frequent presence ?

To me, a fresh new-comer to London, "The Cock" was still hallowed by the muse of Alfred Tennyson which linked me to the glorious past—every man of letters in the Temple and Fleet Street had Will Waterproof's monologue by heart :

"Go, therefore, thou ! Thy betters went
Long since, and came no more ;
With peals of genial clamour sent
From many a tavern door,
With twisted quirks and happy hits,
From misty men of letters ;
The tavern-hours of mighty wits—
Thine elders and thy betters."

But why this plethora of quotation you will ask ? Well, I have thought it prudent to preface my own recollections of tavern hours with these unimpeachable tributes to the respectability of the tavern as a resort of literary and legal Bohemianism, because there is a prejudice in these latter days against the tavern, and a most mistaken notion that men who frequent taverns must be inveterate and incorrigible sots, with no higher

aim than fuddling themselves with liquor. Now, that was not at all the characteristic trait of the tavern-haunter in the days that I recall. We did not consort at inns so much to drink, as to hold social and genial converse, to which conviviality lent a racy and exhilarating gusto. We had the traditions of centuries behind us, with a bead-roll of merry convives in which shine the most illustrious names in English literature. And we had the authority of the wisest of men, from Solomon to Samuel Johnson, to back our belief that the best and surest of joy-philtres is wine "that maketh glad the heart of man."

Clubs were only for the rich and exclusive—for prigs and fogies—dull and dreary haunts of conventionality and respectability—the very thought of which was loathsome to the true Bohemian. The tavern coterie took the place now occupied by a hundred clubs which profess to cater for every conceivable phase of society. These institutions are in harmony, no doubt, with the spirit of the age, and I daresay they fulfil their purpose. Their surroundings are cleaner and brighter and more wholesome than those of the old inn-parlours; the company, if not less mixed, is certainly better dressed—Bohemians in broad-cloth, if indeed Bohemians at all. But I miss the abandon, the raciness, the careless freedom, the random gaiety, the kindly humour and good fellowship, the refreshing unpretentiousness of the old tavern coterie.

When I first came up to London, there were taverns to suit every taste. You knew where to find any sort of people that you might care to associate with. Law, Literature, the Stage, Sport — you could be sure of finding their representatives in one or other of their favourite taverns.

There was nothing disreputable in resorting to taverns in those days. Dr. Johnson, indeed, drew the line at Bishops. He was offended, says Bozzy, *even* at their going to taverns. "A Bishop," said he, "has nothing

to do at a tippling house. It is not immoral in him to go to a tavern, neither would it be immoral in him to whip a top in Grosvenor Square, but if he did, I hope the boys would fall upon him and apply the whip to *him*."

What would Mrs. Grundy say of any bishop who resorted to a tavern in this priggish twentieth century! I don't say that the tavern in my time was *quite* what it was in Johnson's, but it was at any rate very different from what it is now. And I knew some brilliant men of letters who would have endorsed old Johnson's dictum that a "tavern chair is the throne of human felicity," and have said "ditto" to these remarks of his: "As soon as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care and a freedom from solicitude: when I am seated, I find the master courteous and the servants obsequious to my call: anxious to know and ready to supply my wants: wine there exhilarates my spirits and prompts me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love: I dogmatize and am contradicted and in the conflict of opinions and sentiments I find delight."

There were two taverns in the Strand, opposite Somerset House, next door to one another, both now pulled down, which, in those early London days of mine, were favourite haunts of some of the most brilliant men of letters then living—the "Coach and Horses" and the "Edinburgh Castle." The latter was the older of the two and had the more interesting literary associations, for it was there that the founders of "Punch" incubated their design and knocked into shape the idea which took form as the world-famous London Charivari, greatest of all comic journals.

The "Edinburgh Castle" was one of the dingiest and dirtiest inns within the sound of Bow Bells—the dining-room was dark, narrow, fusty and ill-ventilated, the smoking-room was small, gloomy and comfortless, indeed I think the gas was lit there all day long. But even those far-famed Fleet Street hostelries the "Cock"

and the "Old Cheshire Cheese" did not serve you up better chops and steaks, or provide you with better liquor to wash down your victuals withal. And you got far more for your money than in Fleet Street. Both the "Cock" and the "Cheese" were always somewhat niggardly in their allowance of steak, but the "Edinburgh Castle" gave generous measure. It was in my early days one of the few houses in London where you could get real Scotch whisky—a drink very little patronised by Londoners then, for gin was the popular spirit of Cockaigne.

The head waiter, "John," was, without exception, the most untidy, unkempt, and grimy waiter I ever saw; the only one, too, I ever knew who wore spectacles. His hair was long, thick, and wildly straggling—he had to shake it back from his forehead when he wanted to get a clear sight of any object; his moustache and beard were ragged and untrimmed. Yet he was popular. There was character and kindly humour in his deeply-lined face, and I can hear now the thick, husky tones of his voice, as he acknowledged your tip in *one* word, "Thank-you-very-much-obliged-to-you-sir," without the ghost of a break in it. "Ned" Blanchard, an ideal Bohemian, of whom I shall have a good deal to say presently, wrote some clever verses on "John," in celebration of his twenty-fifth birthday at the "Edinburgh!" They appeared in "Figaro"; here are the two concluding stanzas:

"In all these years of chops well done,
How the sands of life have run!
Furrowing brows and doubling chins,
Where are pulpits like our inns?
Vacant seats and empty chairs,
Wrinkled hands and thin grey hairs!
What has stern experience taught us
Since our first chop here was brought us?
Time that o'er the waiter passes,
Bridging e'en *his* nose with glasses,
Has his hour-glass turned o'er,
Freely o'er this sanded floor,

" Yet its boxes, benches, shelves,
Are not altered like ourselves.
Nay, the very flies but grow
Like all the flies we used to know.

" Happy are they who in twenty-five years,
Find a record no worse than with ' John ' appears
Of a wish to do well and an effort to try,
For more than the fourth of a century.
Ever with readiness, ever with zeal,
Helping the hungry and bringing the meal,
Night and day, day and night,
Soothing the wants of the appetite,
And giving the change which is always right.
Oh, may we all, when our reckoning comes,
On the top of Life's table so balance our thumbs,
And add the items all gone before
Into a total as safe and sure,

" Ready to say,
In ' John's ' own way,
' Thank you, Sir, much obliged ! Thanks
Good day ! ' "

Blanchard was much attached to " John." In his diary under date December 6th, 1879, is the following entry :

" Gave ' John ' at Edinburgh Castle, his present, sent by my wife for ' John's ' birthday, August 28th, 1879 ; for thirty years at the Edinburgh Castle ; and with the best wishes of those who knew him ! The poor old head-waiter, quite overcome by the unexpected recognition of him, and many memories recalled on my own part as I delivered the gift, equally as suggestive of the past."

And again :

" January 1883, 24th, death of ' John ' the old head-waiter of the Edinburgh Castle, aged fifty-three, whom I duly honoured on October 17th of last year."

Yes, it was a dark, gloomy-looking old haunt of Bohemians, that " Edinburgh Castle," with its sanded floor and its high-backed boxes, with their frowsy horse-hair and American-leather seats. It had not a pleasant

or inviting aspect to the outsider, but to those who knew its ways and its people, how rich it was in reminiscences and how fragrantly redolent of melancholy and humorous and tender memories of the men who had squeezed through that narrow passage, past loiterers at the little bar window, and had taken their chop or their steak at one of those exiguous tables in the room beyond. Many a brilliant article that set half England talking was conned and penned there, and literary ventures destined to be familiar from one end of the world to the other, were brought to light over a tankard of beer or a glass of gin. For Douglas Jerrold and Mark Lemon and Henry Mayhew and Laman Blanchard and a host of other men of letters, ate and drank and smoked and talked and wrote in those boxes around which "John" hovered as the tutelary genius.

It was here that I met and had many a talk with Gus Mayhew, in some respects the cleverest of the three famous brothers, author of two excellent novels, "The Prettiest Girl in Bloomsbury," and "Paved with Gold." He was an old man when I first made his acquaintance — handsome and stately as all the Mayhews were—a great authority on dogs, especially St. Bernards, and mastiffs. I was instrumental in inducing him to give readings from his own works at the "Castle" Assembly Rooms, Richmond. We sold lots of tickets and the hall was well filled. But Gus had to read sitting, his voice was not strong enough to reach the ears of a third of his audience, which melted silently away till he was reading to empty benches, but he was so short-sighted and so absorbed in the enjoyment of his own reading that he was quite unconscious of the defection of his hearers and the few of us who were left made such a tremendous row when he had finished, that he retired from the platform under the firm impression that he had received the enthusiastic plaudits of a crowded house. We never undeceived the dear old man.

Hither, too, used to come Joe Pope, the genial and

gigantic doctor—gigantic in respect of girth not height, for though he measured but 5ft. 6ins. he weighed upwards of twenty stone. The big broad-brimmed, soft felt-hat, the eternal cigar in the corner of his mouth, the rich, husky chuckle breaking into the rippling laugh —how vividly they come before me as I recall his figure! What delicious fun, kindly if mischievous, at which none laughed more heartily than "Jope" himself, Wallis Mackay used to make of the predicaments entailed by Joe's obesity, in the "Captious Critic," never so bright and clever as when "Wally's" wit sparkled alike in drawings and letter-press. With the jolly man-mountain came generally his almost inseparable pal, William ("Louis Napoleon") Holland, with waxed moustache, and chin-tuft, an exact replica of his imperial model, best known to Londoners as "Bill 'Olland of the Surrey Theayter."

And a still more famous character, Captain Matthew Webb, the hero of the great Channel swim, also accompanied these two. Webb was usually a very quiet and taciturn person, and left Joe Pope to do all the talking, for the doctor was his showman who took him about the country and lectured on him. The great swimmer was a good-looking man of fine physique—he stood 5ft. 8in. scaled fourteen stone and measured nearly forty-four inches round the chest. He had one of those stolid, dogged English faces which I have noticed in many great fighters. Tom Sayers had such a face, so had Henry Hook, the Victoria Cross hero, at the British Museum Reading room, whose feats of valour at Rorke's Drift have been celebrated by a score of pens. Webb's powers of endurance were marvellous, none of his rivals have ever approached him in this respect. He once swam for thirty-eight hours, fifty-two minutes, without a stop, and then after a rest of twenty-one minutes, during which he did not leave the water, completed the remainder of a sixty hours' swim. The public subscription raised in recognition of his wonderful exploit was so

well invested that it would have made him comfortable for life. But his head was turned by all the honours paid him and having once attained notoriety he could not live without it. Domestic trouble, too, made him reckless, and so he risked his life and lost it in a mad attempt to swim the rapids below the Falls of Niagara.

I am reminded by this mention of Captain Webb of two other noted swimmers whom I knew. One of these was Cavill, a Russian, who would have rivalled Webb's great feat, but for the stupidity of some fishermen, who, thinking that he was drowning, insisted on pulling him out of the water, when, having started from Calais, he was within a mile of the English coast. I only saw Cavill once, and that was under peculiar circumstances. There was an artist whom I knew, named Moyr-Smith, well-known as an illustrator of books and also as painter of the frescos in Holloway's palatial Sanatorium at Egham. I paid him a visit one day, at his picturesque Putney house, designed by himself. When he came down to welcome me, he said :—

"Come into my studio ; I have something to show you that will interest you."

I entered the studio, he drew aside a curtain and revealed the nude figure of one of the most magnificently proportioned men I have ever seen. This was Cavill, then considerably over forty, but the very beau-ideal of vigorous full-blooded, athletic manhood. I had a talk with him then, and he spoke bitterly of his great disappointment in being robbed of the certainty of equalling the feat which had made Webb celebrated, and which no one since has succeeded in accomplishing.

The other noted swimmer was J. B. Johnson, the hero of a gallant rescue which drew from the "Daily Telegraph" one of its most eloquent "leaders," commencing with the invocation "Hail to thee, J. B. Johnson!" The heroic exploit which inspired the Tyrtean strains of the "D. T." was on this wise :—As one of the penny steamers was passing under London Bridge, an elderly

gentleman, who was sitting on the gunwale with his feet on the seat, absorbed in a newspaper, lost his balance and fell into the water. Shouts and screams filled the air as the old gentleman floundered helplessly in the water, calling "Help, help"! Suddenly from the crowd on the bridge, a figure leapt on the balustrade, plunged into the river, reached the drowning man, and swam with him to the pier The acclamations which greeted the hero were deafening and when the "D. T.'s" "leader" appeared the next day, everyone agreed that the rhapsodical eulogy was well-deserved.

It was not until a week or two later that it transpired that the old gentleman rescued from a watery grave was Peter Johnson, elder brother of J. B., and champion diver of England, and that the rescue was a cleverly planned ruse of the two brothers to bring the younger and less known into notoriety!

But this is inexcusable digression; let me hark back to my trail.

Next door to the "Edinburgh Castle," as I have said, was the "Coach and Horses," which possessed a large, roomy, airy smoking room, whither the literary habitués of the "Edinburgh" migrated, the Mayhews, Douglas Jerrold, and the rest of them. Douglas Jerrold was, of course, before my time, but when I first knew the "Coach and Horses," Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks (the elder), Godfrey Turner, Thornton Hunt (son of Leigh Hunt), George Augustus Sala, Dutton Cook, Sidney Laman Blanchard, Edmund Yates, and other well-known journalists and men of letters, used to meet in that smoking-room. Most of the frequenters were known to one another, but there was no very rigid exclusiveness. If you came in with or without introduction to the company your presence excited no comment. You ordered your pint of bitter or "go" of gin, and lit your pipe; if you were of a modest disposition you took a back seat and there you might enjoy a feast of reason and a flow of soul, such as you might search

in vain for in the clubs where literary men now consort. The talk was witty and racy, the men let themselves go, and scintillated, undisturbed, as the wits of to-day appear to be, by the suspicion that their neighbours and rivals may be covertly making note of the good things carelessly dropped, to dish them up in their own "copy." That this is what happens nowadays I know from bitter experience. On one occasion I was with a number of young journalists in a well-known literary resort. I happened to be in a reminiscing mood, and let myself go. A month afterwards my yarns formed the prize-page in a popular penny journal. I never knew how they got there or who was the thief that appropriated them.

Mark Lemon is the personality that bulks biggest in my memory as I recall these symposia. He was the very embodiment of genial and kindly humour. There was an unctuous richness in the tones in which he told a story, and a mellow thunder in the laugh that came rolling from his prodigious mid-riff, and shook with deep internal rumblings his bulky body, which would have put a bear with a sore head in a good humour. Everyone loved "Uncle Mark," and children adored him. In the children's theatricals at Tavistock House, which all readers of Dickens's "Life" will remember, he was in his element, a very mountain of child-pleasing fun. "Boz" has pictured him to us as "a fat gentleman with curly black hair and a merry face, a-standing on the platform, rubbing his two hands one over the other, as if he was a-washin' of 'em and shaking his head and shoulders like a jelly."

I heard an allusion made once in his presence to his own drama "Hearts are Trumps," which at the time puzzled me, for I had not the key to it. But, on asking Sidney Laman Blanchard what the curious incident was to which reference had been made, he told me the following singular story :—

When Mark Lemon was visiting a friend's house one

day, he found there an elderly gentleman with long white hair and a worn, sad face: he was very seedily clad and there was something in his appearance which excited Lemon's curiosity. When the visitor had gone, Mark inquired who he was. "A rich man once," replied his friend, "lost everything at the gaming table: but the strangest part of the story is that no one, not even the members of his own family, suspected him of gambling until the crash came. He had kept it a secret from all who knew him. He is now little better than a beggar. He comes to see me sometimes and I give him a good meal for the sake of auld lang syne."

The tale haunted Mark. He imagined a daughter waiting at home night after night for the gambling father, ignorant of his secret vice, until the day of ruin revealed the cause of all those mysterious absences. He worked the idea into the play which he called "Hearts are Trumps," the most successful of all his seventy dramas. On the first night it was produced, glancing into the pit, he saw seated among the audience the very man whose career had suggested the plot!

Mark Lemon was a very clever actor, one of the famous Amateur Theatrical Company organised by Dickens to play for the benefit of the Guild of Literature and Art.

I saw him act when he toured the provinces as Falstaff, selecting only the scenes in which the fat knight figures, and dispensing with all scenery. The stage was hung with tapestry to which placards were attached announcing each change of scene, according to the Elizabethan custom. Lemon was naturally so Falstaffian in bulk and features that he needed little make-up. Like Stephen Kemble he could play the part "without stuffing." His performance on the whole was admirable, his voice and laugh were ideally Falstaffian, but he was too kindly and genial in his humour, he was deficient in the sly rascality and deep roguery of the real Sir John. But I recall with delight his fine

outburst of shameless impudence and brazen mendacity as he roared defiantly: "*By the Lord! I knew ye.*"

I have mentioned Sidney Laman Blanchard. He was not, I believe, credited with saying many good things, but there are two that I remember. Talking of Boulogne and the English exiles there, he said the place always reminded him of Tennyson's line, "Shady coves upon a sunny shore." The other was, perhaps, even better. Told that a distinguished Bohemian, whom we all knew well and who was in a chronic state of impecuniosity, had discovered a new colour, Sidney said drily, "Surely that must be the *colour of his money.*"

There was a curious incident connected with the "Coach and Horses" which is worth relating. The first American bar in London was started there, and it was there I became initiated into the mysteries of "cocktails" and "juleps" and "corpse revivers," and "eye-openers." The young lady who presided over this department, a very fine-looking, handsome girl, was a niece by marriage of the landlord, who was a widower. He pestered the girl to marry him. She didn't like him and refused him several times. But, as she was to a large extent dependent upon him, he at last worried her into consenting. The marriage was fixed to take place in the church close by, St. Mary le Strand. The bride and bridegroom stood before the altar, the service went on without a hitch until the bride was asked:—

"Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, etc."

Instead of the expected "I will," she came out with a loud and emphatic "*No, I won't.*" The clergyman almost dropped the book in his astonishment. The bridegroom turned red and then pale—the bride alone remained unmoved. After an awkward pause, the clergyman repeated the question, and again came the decided answer, "*No, I will not.*" There was a hurried conference in whispers between the clergyman, the

bridegroom, and the bride, but as no expostulation had any effect upon her, the whole party adjourned to the vestry. There was a stormy scene, the clergyman threatened the bride with all the pains and penalties of ecclesiastical law—whatever they may be—but she was obdurate. The bridegroom went away vowing deadly vengeance; but, on second thoughts, apparently both he and the parson decided to do nothing. Perhaps there was nothing they *could* do. At any rate there the matter ended so far as they were concerned. A fortnight later the lady was married by special licence to the sub-editor of an evening paper. She had had her revenge upon the man who had pestered her with his wooing ; a rather dastardly revenge, which only a woman would have thought of. But perhaps he deserved it.

One of the first taverns to which I was introduced on my arrival in London was the " Peacock " at Islington, once the great coaching house for the mails running North. The attraction which drew me to the " Peacock " was a singular one. The most famous of all hangmen, Mr. Calcraft, made this his house of call and twice I have spent an hour or two in his society. He had then retired from business and the remarkable point about him was that he would never tolerate the slightest reference to his horrible profession. He had a special chair reserved for him in a cosy corner near the chimney, and a special pair of roomy slippers in which he used comfortably to encase his " trotters " while he smoked his long clay and sipped his hot gin and water. A white-headed, venerable old gentleman he was, and a perfect picture of spotless respectability. He might have been an ex-Lord Mayor, or at any rate an alderman, from his appearance. But no one was supposed to know that he had ever been the public hangman, and he passed by the name of " Mr. Smithson." Any reference to crimes or trials or executions was strictly tabooed in his presence. No allusion to his own hideous office ever passed his lips ; had you addressed him as Calcraft,

the executioner, he would probably have told you with dignified sternness that you had made a mistake and confounded him with some person of whom he knew nothing. When I had the pleasure of conversing with him, the topic was the old mail-coaches, and the brave show they used to make on the first of May, when they turned out, resplendent in fresh paint, with the guards and coachmen in brand new scarlet coats and gold-laced hats. He had been a mail-guard himself, and was enthusiastic on the glories of the old coaching days. How he became hangman, I never heard, but in his animated discourse on coaches and the road in the good old times, one quite forgot what his latest avocation had been. Calcraft had the decency and good sense to recognise that his calling was a thing not to be spoken of, or paraded. It is a pity that similiar reticence has not characterised his successors, some of whom have not been ashamed to make capital out of their gruesome experiences, and have even found a degraded section of the public willing to listen to them on the platform.

Another noted tavern with which I made early acquaintance was the "Waterloo" in the Haymarket, a house intimately connected with the famous theatre close by. It was a tavern that reeked of theatrical memories. Sam Foote, the matchless mimic, one of the first lessees of the Haymarket, here quaffed the convivial cup and set the table on a roar. Miss Farren, before she condescended to become Countess of Derby, did not disdain to nibble a biscuit and sip a glass of negus here. Old Ben Webster and Charles Kean hobnobbed under its roof. And when I was introduced to the house, John Baldwin Buckstone, Sothern, Mr. and Mrs. Chippendale, and other well-known members of the renowned Haymarket company, made the "Waterloo" their house of call. The snuggery was known as "The Owl's Roost" and contained one of the finest collections of theatrical engravings extant. The "Owl's Roost" was at the back of the bar and was only

frequented by privileged persons, old actors, eminent members of the Fancy and celebrities in other walks of life. I went there under the wing of a son of the great W. H. Murray of Edinburgh. A conspicuous object in "The Owl's Roost" was a huge, round-shouldered arm-chair, in the back of which was inserted a brass plate bearing this inscription :—

J. B. BUCKSTONE,
HYS CHAYRE.

There "Bucky" sat in state, monarch of all he surveyed. It was there that I first saw "Ned" Sothern and curiously enough my first impression of him was that he was rather quiet and reserved. There was with him an American actor with long, lank, black hair which fell in masses over his coat collar *à la* Buffalo Bill. I think this must have been Edwin Booth, but I am not sure. Mr. and Mrs. Chippendale, I remember, were always the life and soul of the party, but the conversation was very "shoppy," and seldom turned on any topic that had not some bearing on the theatre. In those salad days, however, when I was green in judgment, merely to sit and look at actors and actresses off the stage and hear them talk, how trivial soever the remarks that fell from their lips, was a privilege. There was an eccentric actor there, George Brain, who was always appealed to when any question requiring an accurate memory was involved. So extraordinary was his memory that he only needed to look once at his part to know it by heart. His hobby was the peerage. It was said that he had the whole of Debrett and Burke by rote and that you could not puzzle him by any reference to its pages.

Buckstone during his latter years almost lived in "The Owl's Roost," and the then Boniface, John Salmon, used to escort him to and from the theatre when his deafness and failing sight made crossing the street rather a perilous adventure.

George Jordan, who played Pygmalion in W. S. Gilbert's "Pygmalion and Galatea," was another actor whom I remember at the "Waterloo." But he was one of those detestable Don Juans who pester one with their love adventures, and, although most of those present found his stories amusing, they bored me to death. And indeed now that I look back upon the hours I spent at the "Waterloo" Tavern, I wonder how I could have found any fascination in the society I met there, for it seems to me that the talk of the old-time actors and actresses off the stage was stale, flat and unprofitable, though I did not find it so *then*. This is one of the cases in which distance does *not* lend enchantment to the view.

Stone's in Panton Street was another house noted for "the tavern hours of mighty wits." I used sometimes to thread the long, narrow entrance passage and take a modest seat among the celebrities. George Augustus Sala, always white-waistcoated, was then generally the Master of the Revels, and his Bardolphian nose would grow redder under the stimulating influence of the bowls of punch which were *de rigueur* there. Sometimes his temper, too, became inflamed and he would use threats of personal violence to those who had the temerity to differ from him. But it was not often that G. A. S. was a disturber of the convivial harmony that reigned at Stone's. I think the Mayhews frequented this tavern, but I do not remember seeing any of the three famous brothers there on the few occasions on which I was a guest. Wiltshire Austin I recall as a brilliant talker at Stone's, though he rather bored one with his perpetual allusions to "my cousin, Lord Aberdare," whom he dragged into the conversation with what Falstaff would have called "damnable iteration." The conversation at Stone's was always bracing, literary and stimulating, if occasionally Rabelaisian.

But Stone's was too far West for me, and I am not qualified to do justice to the literary and Bohemian associations which cluster round it.

To a journalist, the taverns of Fleet Street naturally appealed most strongly, and it is round these that most of my memories of tavern hours centre. First and foremost, of course, " Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese." The literary associations of the " Cheese " do not date back very far, not further, probably, than the third decade of the 19th century. In the 18th century, the house does not appear to have been known to either men of letters or men of fashion and was most likely patronized only by tradesmen, worthy but uninteresting nobodies, with whom gallants and wits would have scorned to consort.

The great Johnson Myth has grown up within the last five and thirty years and rests on no solid basis of fact. When I first began to frequent the " Cheese " in the sixties, there was a hazy tradition that Dr. Johnson had sometimes been seen in the house, but no one, so far as I remember, ventured to suggest more than that the immortal Doctor *might have* now and then visited the tavern. And now, look you, how the tiny legend has blossomed into a mighty certified fact! There is actually a brass plate let into the panelling, bearing the splendidly mendacious inscription *" The favourite seat of Doctor Samuel Johnson"*!!! For myself, I don't for a moment believe that Dr. Samuel Johnson was an habitual frequenter of the " Cheshire Cheese." There is no proof except the vaguest hearsay evidence that he ever so much as set foot inside the tavern. The two taverns that we *know* to have been Johnson's favourite resorts were the " Mitre " in Mitre Court, Temple, and the " Essex Head," Essex Street, Strand. Literary pilgrims used to resort to the latter in my early days, and gaze with reverence at the old door and knocker which were extant when Johnson founded the Essex Head Club ; and there was also the round-backed armchair in which the Doctor sat as president of the club. There was preserved too, a framed copy of the rules of the club, drawn up by Johnson, and a facsimile of his

letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds inviting him to be a member. It runs thus :—

"December 4th, 1783."

"DEAR SIR,

"It is inconvenient to me to come out : I should else have waited on you with an account of a little evening club which we are establishing in Essex Street in the Strand and of which you are desired to be one. It will be held at the Essex Head, now kept by an old servant of Thrale's. The company is numerous, and, as you will see by the list, miscellaneous. The terms are lax and the expenses light. Mr. Barry was adopted by Mr. Brocklesby, who joined with me in forming the plan. We meet thrice a week and he who misses forfeits two-pence. If you are willing to become a member, draw a line under your name. Return the list. We meet for the first time on Monday at eight.

"I am, etc.,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

These relics are genuine. What would not "Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese" give to possess anything so authentic ! Had the Essex Head remained unrenovated, in its picturesque antiquity, it is possible that it might have thrown the "Cheese" into the shade as a popular resort of men of letters. But its present prosaic exterior chokes off even the most ardent devotee. Yet, here is the only real shrine to which Johnsonian pilgrims should bend their reverent steps.

The present "Mitre" in Mitre Court Temple, if it even stand on the site of Johnson's "Mitre," is a building of modern date, and, so far as I remember, has preserved no genuine relics of the Doctor and his convives, though the old hostelry figures largely in "Boswell." It was a popular eating-house when I was young in London, and one liked to call up the ghosts of Johnson and Goldsmith and Reynolds as one ate one's liberal eighteen-penny dinner from the joint, with vegetables and cheese included. An enterprising Scotsman, regardless of

Sassenach traditions, re-christened the house, the Clachan, and sold excellent Scotch whisky to his perfervid countrymen who gathered there nightly. Perhaps Samuel Johnson would have appreciated Scotland's national liquor. It is on record that he once and only once tasted the spirit which is now as popular in England as in Scotland. During his famous "Tour" with the faithful Bozzy, the latter made the following entry in his journal in connection with Inverary: "We supped well, and after supper Dr. Johnson, whom I had not seen taste any fermented liquor during all our travels, called for a gill of whisky. 'Come,' said he, 'let me know what it is that makes a Scotchman happy!' He drank it all but a drop, which I begged leave to pour into my glass, that I might say we had drunk whisky together. I proposed Mrs. Thrale should be our toast. He would not have *her* drunk in whisky but rather some 'insular lady,' so we drank one of the ladies we had lately left." That was rather a doubtful compliment to the "insular ladies," but on the whole I gather that Johnson enjoyed that gill of whisky, and would not have disapproved of the spirit being drunk even in the "Mitre," though he would, I am sure, have strongly objected to the barbarous change in nomenclature.

In company with my old friend W. E. Church (whom Sir Benjamin Richardson dubbed "The Pilgrim of London"), I have paid more than one pilgrimage to taverns haunted by the shade of Johnson. One of these I remember was the "Old Jamaica" in Cornhill, where they preserved an ancient punch-bowl from which both Samuel Johnson and David Garrick were said to have drunk.

But we neither of us believed in the "Cheshire Cheese" Johnson.

Apart from the Johnsonian Myth "Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese" is without doubt the most interesting, attractive and picturesque of the old-time London taverns now existing. For the last seventy years, at any rate,

it has been the haunt of all the best-known men of letters of their time. There is no other tavern in London in which I have spent so many hours, for, out of term-time, when there were no dinners in Hall, I used to take my modest steak, with potatoes in their jackets, stewed cheese and pint of stout and bitter, at least five nights in the week, in company with my old Cambridge chum in King's Bench Walk. There were two dining-rooms in those days, and no bar but the little bird-cage where diners would pause and have a gin and bitters before their steaks. What is now the bar was the room specially frequented by fogeys, veteran customers who liked soberness and quiet. I always preferred dining with the fogeys, for there were some interesting old fossils among them who could be drawn out over their post-prandial long clays and goes of "rack," the specific term for gin at the "Cheese," just as "Cork" is for Irish whisky—no one drank Scotch at that time. What yarns I have listened to in those hard, oak boxes, with the sanded or sawdust-sprinkled floor underfoot! Precisely at six-o'clock, William, the waiter, touched a spring under one of the tables and a drawer flew out filled with long church-wardens—that was the signal for smoking. On either side of the fire-place sat a venerable fogey who was reckoned to have a prescriptive right to that place. One of them was a long, lean, solemn-looking person named Burney, who had a claim to distinction in the fact that he had been a fellow clerk with Charles Lamb in the India House and had known the "gentle Elia" personally. Burney had been pensioned off, like Lamb, and a part of his pension consisted, I believe, in a daily dinner at the "Cheese." I fancy it must have been the benevolent act of some private patron. At any rate it is a fact that Burney was provided with meat and drink at the "Cheese" to the extent of three shillings per diem. And when he arrived, you would hear William the waiter, bawl to the cook upstairs, "Mr. Burney's steak," which was sufficient to indicate the precise

amount of cooking required, for every customer had his peculiar taste in this respect, which William voiced in a shout to the cook, a very stout, red faced, and rather irascible woman, "One rump steak, under done," "Two chops well done" and the like.

Burney, who was, I think, a Scotchman, was rather a hard person to draw, but was amenable to offers of goes of " rack," if very judiciously and artfully made, and in return would give reminiscences of Charles Lamb at the old India House, and other matters of interest to all lovers of Elia and his friends.

The other fire-side seat was occupied by Cyrus Jay, a white-haired, gruff-voiced, rather testy old Bohemian who had lived not wisely but too well. He was the son of the once famous Jay of Bath, a popular Nonconformist preacher who had a high reputation in his day, both for eloquence and piety. The latter of these gifts was certainly *not* inherited by his son, who had a taste for the dissipated side of tavern life which had brought him down from comparative affluence to a sordid, shiftless, hand-to-mouth existence, eked out by a slender annuity. He had been a solicitor, and in 1886 he published by subscription a little book entitled, " The Law, what I have Seen, Heard and Known," a copy of which I purchased from him in the " Cheese." It was dedicated " To the Lawyers and Gentlemen with whom I have dined for more than half a century at the Old Cheshire Cheese Tavern." Cyrus Jay was as garrulous as Burney was taciturn. He overflowed with amusing and racy reminiscences, but as his goes of " rack " rose in number, I have a shrewd suspicion that he drew the long bow with a reckless contempt for the credulity of his hearers. He was always worth listening to, however, when he got upon the theatre, for he had seen the Kembles and Mrs. Siddons and Edward Kean, Charles Mayne Young, Miss Cushman, Miss O'Neile, Mrs. Keeley, Helen Faucit, Madame Vestris, Macready, Taglioni, Cerito, and all the stars of the drama and the ballet. How

eloquent he would wax over Taglioni! "an angel in gauze," he called her, "surrounded" he would add, "by a halo of chastity!" For I will do the old man the justice to say, that, rake and roué though he was, he invariably protested that the most beautiful dancing was the least suggestive, and that any soupçon of indecency robbed the Terpsichorean art of all attraction for him, for he liked to be absorbed in the poetry of motion, undistracted by other thoughts.

Taglioni, by the way, I saw some years later, when, ruined by the breaking of a bank, she came over to England, an old woman of near eighty, hoping even at that age to get pupils in the art of which she had once been so brilliant an exponent.

Cyrus Jay had known, or at any rate, *said* he had known, Barham of the "Ingoldsby Legends," Theodore Hook, and other noted wits of whom he had good stories to tell. He would go on yarning as long as anyone would stand him drinks, but at ten o'clock, William, the waiter, would say, "Now, Mr. Jay, it's time you was a-goin 'ome." If the old gentleman were recalcitrant and declined to move, the "boss," genial, bland, bald, urbane B. A. Moore, would come and persuade him to leave, but he generally had to be escorted to his chambers in Serjeant's Inn.

The Johnson Myth owes much to Cyrus Jay who used to declare that he had met old gentlemen in the "Cheese" who remembered Johnson there *nightly!* That was more than I could ever swallow. If Johnson had frequented the "Cheese" *nightly*, there would have been *some* record of the fact—there is *none*. But then no one who knew Cyrus Jay ever took him seriously.

Among the many ghosts that the mere name of the "Old Cheshire Cheese" calls up before me, three stand prominent. I see the picturesque, sable-silvered head of William Morris, with its thick clustering curls—the solemn visage of James Thomson, the poet of "The City of Dreadful Night"—and the quiet, sober,

spectacled face of William Brighty Rands, the delightful author of "Lilliput Levee." I had some memorable talks with William Morris, and remember how his voice rang and his face kindled when the talk touched on Socialism or any great democratic movement that stirred his fiery soul. And I recall one never-to-be-forgotten "crack" on Keats, when four strangers met at one table in the "Cheese"—all of whom knew the "Ode to the Nightingale" by heart, and could repeat it without a slip. That is one of the reminiscences that sheds a lustre round my tavern hours which will make them shine bright in my memory to the last.

James Thomson, I seldom had speech with, for he was gloomy and silent till many and deep potations had lifted the embargo from his tongue, and then he poured forth lugubrious pessimism or fierce denunciations of the social system, which were not pleasant or profitable to listen to. Rare indeed were the moments in which you could catch him in the mood in which he wrote his charming "Sunday at Hampstead" and "Sunday up the River." We had a bond of union in our common connexion with "Cope's Tobacco Plant," a journal which I edited for a short period, and to which some brilliant pens, besides Thomson's, contributed.

William Brighty Rands was a highly-gifted man of letters, who would have won wider fame had he written always under his own name instead of frittering his reputation away on a number of pseudonyms, "Henry Holbeach," "Matthew Browne," "Timon Fieldmouse" and the like. As "Matthew Browne" he wrote some charmingly original essays in the "Argosy," which during the first year of its existence was one of the most brilliant magazines I remember. Charles Reade's masterly and powerful novel "Griffith Gaunt" first appeared in the pages of the "Argosy," to which Jean Ingelow, George Macdonald, Alexander Smith, Anthony Trollope, Arminius Vambèry, Paolo Ruffini, author of "Doctor Antonio," a remarkable novel, and a host of other

sparkling writers contributed. Rands wrote one story for the "Argosy," "Shoemaker's Village," which is of quite unique excellence, full of the quaint, whimsical humour that was peculiarly his own. And as a writer of fairy tales for children he had no superior and hardly an equal. "Lilliput Legends" contain as much graceful verse and beautiful fancy as any poems for children that I know. But it was of Nature that Rands and I used to talk in a cosy, secluded corner of the "Cheese." We met there on common ground, for I have ever been from the earliest days I can remember, one of the "Children of the Open Air"—a lover of every living thing in marsh or meadow, woodland or moorland. And Rands could talk as finely as he could write of Nature, quietly, gently, tenderly, fancifully—with just a faint undernote of enthusiasm running through his sober tones. These, too, were tavern hours which it does me good to recall.

But there were breezier and racier phases of conviviality with which the old "Cheese" is associated in my memory—festive gatherings in the smaller rooms upstairs, when the old China punch bowls, stacked at other times in picturesque piles above the bar, figured largely and filled the nostrils with grateful fragrance, even before they appealed to the palate of the enraptured drinker. I have known no merrier symposia than those held round the china punch bowls of the "Cheese." The dullest intellects flashed into wit under that stimulating influence and the brightest coruscated with more than their wonted brilliance. Those were hours when young and fervid spirits forgot all that was sordid and mean and depressing in human life and were exalted into demi-gods with the world at their feet.

> "Kings may be blest—but Tam was glorious,
> O'er a' the ills o' life victorious."

It was just so that *we* felt. With never a king in Christendom would we have changed places at such

uplifting moments, when we threw the reins on the neck of Imagination and let her gallop away with us where she would. We *lived* and had great visions in those golden, never-to-be-forgotten tavern hours.

What if the visions vanished in " the light of common day"—melted into thin air, like Prospero's cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces and solemn temples! We had *seen* them—there had been opened to us a splendid vista of the heroic life that might be—the life of romantic endeavour and high achievement—that Fancy paints with vivid brush for the eyes of eager, hot-hearted youth. Such glimpses, fleeting and shadowy, were all that most of us ever saw of the paths of glory, yet Memory lingers over the hours that gave us those glimpses with a tender tolerance and a regret too kindly for upbraiding.

The introduction of the drinking bar into " Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese " was an innovation hotly resented by the veteran *habitués* of the house. They maintained that it was lowering the dignity of the tavern to open its portals to the bar-loafer. They complained of being robbed of their own particular cosy dining-room in the interest of mere tipplers, whose presence was an insult to the venerable traditions of the place, and they prophesied a speedy collapse of its ancient reputation. That prophesy has not been fulfilled, but the drinking-bar certainly did introduce a new element into the clientèle of the " Cheese "—the element of sport. There are those who maintain still, that the old tavern would have been better without that element. But when I think of jolly, genial, rubicund John Corlett and the merry hours I have spent in his company in that particular cosy corner which he loved, I cannot but admit that there is something to be said in favour of the infusion of the sporting spirit into the life of the old " Cheese." The " Master " of the " Pink 'Un " and his satellites may not have added to the literary prestige of the " Cheese," but they have certainly contributed to keep up its name

for jollity and mirth. And there was not wanting, too, a literary flavour to their revelry. "Chat" Rhys, whose charming verses were not unworthy of his loved Catullus, Willie Goldberg ("The Shifter"), gay and handsome young Shirley Brooks, Jemmy Davis, the "Owen Hall" of "Geisha" fame, "Bill" Yardley, the laurelled Light Blue cricketer, were all men of brains, with the literary as well as the sporting instinct.

And then, of purely sporting men—there was old Joe Capp "T' Owd mon," with whom I loved to have a "crack" over a bottle of port in the "wine-office." For we were brother sportsmen, and sport is a bond that links men whose tastes may otherwise be as wide apart as the poles. There rise before me as I recall the sporting memories of the "Cheese" the tall and stately figure of Alan Jeffery ("The Member for Tattersall's"), the mighty and ear-assaulting piper who had the figure-head of a Duke, as one imagines Dukes *ought to be*, not the commonplace lineaments of most Dukes as they *are*—the fierce, almost truculent visage of Tam Reid, most bellicose and aggressive of Scotsmen, when he thought the honour of his country was at stake, and yet "a verra brither" when you knew him well and found him in his convivial mood—the ruddy, honest, wholesome face of Martin Cobbett, smacking of the breezy race-course, and the windy downs and tramps along country lanes, for he was ever, in his own words, "an open-air merchant"—Kendal of the "Scotsman," a wild, impulsive Caledonian—John Cross, portly, benevolent, with his head of curly iron-grey hair set at a picturesque angle on his broad shoulders—Bob Watson, solemn-visaged, as if he bore the whole world of Turf Finance, Atlas-like, on his solitary shoulders—the colossal frame and shining "topper" of "Daddy Hoof"—the low-throated shirt-collar, the gladiatorial neck, the broad-leafed hat, and rollicking, impudent air of Jack Coney—these and a host of other familiar faces crowd upon my memory as I call up the ghosts of sportsmen dead and

gone whom I have met in the haunted chambers of the "Cheese."

There are two veterans of those days who are still living, hale and hearty, whose figures come vividly before my mind's eye as I write—Henry Smurthwaite, tall, straight, stalwart, brindled-haired, erstwhile Editor of the once famous "Bell's Life"—the most courteous, and charming gentleman that ever filled an editorial chair—an accomplished writer of prose and verse—a true lover of Nature, with whom I have had many a talk on the birds that we both love and have planned bird's nesting expeditions on Hayes Common which alas! never materialized. And Harry Bussy, "Handsome Harry," the Evergreen—honoured doyen of Gallery Reporters—who still walks Fleet Street, with curly, white head erect, with firm and buoyant step, and the dapper turnout from crown to sole that marks the wise urban who knows that "the apparel oft proclaims the man."

In these latter days the great Johnson Myth has attracted even fashionable ladies to the "Cheese"—an innovation which I, frankly, view with horror. It is enough to make the great Cheese-men of the past turn in their graves, for 'tis the desecration of a haunt sacred to the Eleusinian mysteries of masculine conviviality, into which no woman should be allowed to pry. I remember quite well the shock of horror I experienced at the sight of the first woman I had ever seen dining at the "Cheese." It was Mrs. Conover, then lessee of the Olympic Theatre—a lady who was as pronounced a Bohemian as any of her sex I have ever met. It was only her garb that was out of place among the dining boxes whose dark oaken backs had never been rubbed by any but male shoulders. For she was as masculine in her ways and thoughts and theories of life as any man among the lot of us. It was my old friend Byron Webber, breeziest and raciest of Bohemians, who introduced me to her. She was a somewhat argumentative

person and had been, I fancy, boring Byron considerably, when he spied me — promptly introduced me and vacated his seat, leaving me *vis-à-vis* with—the first woman I had ever seen dining at the "Cheese!" I suppose I must have shown some embarrassment, for she deemed it necessary to set me at my ease at once by saying in a tone that rather startled me :—

"Now, look here, I'm dining here on my own—just like one of you men. Please ignore the accident of sex and look upon me as you would on one of your own gender. Don't suppose that I want to be treated. I pay for myself. I don't want any nonsense of 'paying for the lady.' I'm independent. Now, having scotched that stupid notion, let you and me chum together like pals."

She *was* outspoken and no mistake, and proceeded to air her views on marriage and the relations between the sexes with a broadness and frankness which I confess disconcerted me a little at first. But I found in the end that she was really a good sort, with sensible, if advanced, views on most topics. Her talk was refreshing in its unconventionality, but all the same I was sorry to see the "Cheese" invaded by the petticoat—I shuddered at the thought of that garment becoming a permanent feature of the ancient tavern—for the admission of women might be expected to produce such discord and confusion as Swift pictured reigning under similar circumstances.

"When frighted at the clamorous crew
Away the God of Silence flew.
* * * * * * * *
Now enter over-weening Pride,
And Scandal ever-gaping wide,
And Malice always judging worst ;
And Vanity with pocket glass :
And Impudence with front of brass :
And studied Affectation came
Each limb and feature out of frame.
While Ignorance with brain of lead
Flew hovering o'er each female head."

There were, of course, ladies behind the bar—over whom presided for some years a very remarkable woman. Miss Saddington ("Saddy" to her intimates) was a person of uncommon wit and intelligence—whose powers of repartee were the admiration of all who frequented the old house, even of those who were worsted in the wit-combats in which she loved to engage. Her bright, cheerful, homely face threw a radiance over the dingy bar and made it seem cosier and more "homey" than even did the roaring winter fire. And, for all her ready, clever, and sometimes caustic, tongue, she was as kindhearted and motherly a soul as a man, miserable and craving for sympathy, could wish to meet with. Many a forlorn journalist had reason to be grateful to "Saddy" for generous help and kindly counsel—and I here pay my hearty tribute of respect and admiration to her memory. Miss Saddington died in the "Cheese" and her death threw a gloom over the old tavern which rested there for many a long day.

No mention of the "Cheese" would be complete without reference to "William" the waiter. I have not the remotest idea what his surname was—nor I suppose had anyone else. He was head waiter when I first knew the "Cheese" in 1864, and he held that office for at least five and twenty years after that. A little, sandy-haired man, with small, mutton-chop whiskers of the same hue, with a self-possessed manner and an absolutely expressionless face, William was as shrewd and alert as any of his calling I ever met. His memory was abnormally retentive and I don't think I ever caught him out in an error of any kind. There was also a dry humour in William which occasionally disconcerted those who tried to take a rise out of him. A little crackling laugh, like the cackle of a hen, was the only mode in which I ever knew William vent his mirth. When he had a holiday, he spent it in helping a pal of his—the head waiter at the Bolt-in-Tun over the way; or, in tall, silk hat and overcoat with velvet collar, he

would stroll down to the " Cheese " and move uneasily about among the customers—or from some secluded coign of vantage look down with critical eye upon all that passed. In his later days, William abdicated the head-waitership and took on the office of cellar-man. I have no doubt he discharged his duties efficiently, but to me he always looked like a fish out of water in his leathern apron and shirt sleeves—one could not divest him of the habiliments of the waiter which he had worn for more than a quarter of a century.

I never heard whether William left any money. Waiters generally do. I remember my surprise on learning from a friend of mine at the Chancery Bar that " James " the head waiter at Anderton's Hotel (a favourite resort of racing men, notoriously liberal in their tips if they have had a good time), not far distant from the " Cheshire Cheese " in Fleet Street, had been to consult him as to the investment of his savings which amounted to £7,000! And I should think that " Ben " the portly and pompous head waiter of the " Rainbow " must also have feathered his nest pretty comfortably; for, in addition to his tips, he was in the habit of lending sovereigns to temporarily impecunious young Templars, from Saturday to Monday and charging half-a-crown interest for the loan and a shilling for each day, after that, while the principal remained unpaid!

I have not exhausted the half of the memories which cluster round the " Olde Cheshire Cheese " but I must reluctantly tear myself away from a tavern which has played so large a part in my own life and in the lives of nearly every London barrister and journalist of my time.

But it would be wickedly ungrateful to leave the " Cheese " without a passing tribute to " The Pudding," that marvellous compound of rump-steak, kidneys, larks, oysters, mushrooms—I do not pretend to know what *all* the ingredients of that famous dish are—I only know that my mouth waters at the remembrance of it.

The pen that wrote "The Ballad of Bouillabaisse" could alone do justice to the "Cheese Pudding."

> "Indeed a rich and savoury stew 'tis,
> And true philosophers, methinks,
> Who love all sorts of natural beauties,
> Should love good victuals and good drinks."

Saturday used to be, and I suppose still is, "Pudding Day" at the "Cheese." Unless my memory plays me false there were two puddings in the days when I was a constant diner there—one at 1.30 p.m. and the other at 5 p.m. I witnessed the awful tragedy, still spoken of with bated breath at the "Cheese," when Tom the second waiter, bearing the mighty bowl, down the narrow corkscrew staircase from the kitchen (which is upstairs) tripped and—*fell!*—with a crash that sent a thrill of horror to the heart of every one in the house. The pudding lay, a smoking mess, on the sanded passage floor! I was one of those who rushed out from the bar to see what had happened. I shall never forget the appalling scene of wreck and ruin and the look of blank dismay and horror on the face of that unhappy waiter. It was the 1.30 pudding and I was a 5 o'clock puddingite, so I could gaze on the catastrophe with something like philosophical calm. But to the expectant diners that tremendous cataclysm came like a bolt from the blue, shattering all their hopes. The Boniface, Mr. B. A. Moore, bore the blow with Christian resignation —but those who knew him best said that not for many months was he quite himself again. As presiding genius at the ceremony of helping the pudding Mr. Moore presented a picture of august dignity which I have never seen surpassed by any public functionary. In evening dress, with a becoming look of gravity on his benevolent face—he had the air almost of a high priest officiating at some solemn, sacrificial rite.

One other memory of the "Cheese" lives yet on my

palate. The Old East India Brown Sherry. Not half-a dozen times in forty years, have I tasted it, for it was an expensive liquor—a guinea a bottle—and therefore rarely to be indulged in. But body o' Bacchus! what a wine it was! Is there any of that priceless liquor left in the cellars of the "Cheese?" Does any one I wonder, drink Old East India Brown Sherry now—or has it gone utterly out of fashion like Madeira? I would risk an attack of liver even now to crack a bottle of that noble, nutty vintage once more, and amid all the pangs that followed, would murmur, "It was worth it."

There were one or two other taverns at which I have passed hours, which linger in my recollection. Among them was the once famous Albion, hard by Drury Lane Theatre where, after the play was over, there assembled for supper a host of celebrities literary and theatrical. There was one particular corner occupied by Charles Dickens, and happy indeed were the favoured few who were permitted to sit at table with "The Inimitable." But to me it was happiness enough to get as close as I could to the shrine of genius and listen in rapt awe to the accents of the great Magician whose name was familiar in men's mouths as household words over two hemispheres, wherever the English tongue was spoken on the face of the globe. There was much laughter where Dickens sat, but I cannot recall any brilliant *bon mots*, perhaps there weren't any—even genius does not *always* scintillate in its tavern hours. I used to look with awe, too, at John Oxenford, the great dramatic critic of the *Times*, writing his critique of the play he had just witnessed, in a queer little box with glass windows, a big tumbler of steaming hot brown brandy by his side—and, asleep on a seat against the wall, the printer's devil who was to carry the "copy," when finished, to the office in Printing House Square.

There was no Early Closing Hours Act in those days and I have sat in the Albion with brother Bohemians till three and then strolled into Covent Garden—

watched the market gardeners' waggons unpacked,—attended at the lively auctions of fruit and vegetables —and wound up with a tremendous breakfast at the salesmen's ordinary at the Russell Arms—where substantial joints figured smoking on the boards, flanked by the choicest greens from the market. Those were Homeric banquets indeed!

The head-waiter at the Albion was a person of immense importance. His name was Ponsfort—I don't know how many years he was there, but he was quite an affluent gentleman in his retirement. I met him once afterwards at Hastings—where I think he owned an hotel—he was with his wife and daughter and, with all his prosperity, was condescending to an old customer of the Albion.

Evans's and Paddy Green, with the readily proffered snuff box, flit past me as I look back. I have never enjoyed chops and potatoes more, than at those famous supper rooms—*such* potatoes! and the way the waiter, with one dexterous twist squeezed every mealy fragment from the skins was a feat of legerdemain. One supped there to the sweet sounds of music. The company of glee-singers had an almost world-wide celebrity.

Then, under the shadow of the old Playhouse, was the "Old Drury Tavern" kept in my time by Harry Boleno, the famous clown—to secure whom was to secure the certain success of a pantomime. He was an excellent Boniface was Harry, and his handsome young wife was a very effective ornament to the bar. Among the many actors I met there, I remember vividly, old Neville, the father of Henry, a picturesque white-haired old gentleman who might have sat for the portrait of the ideal old English Squire. I recall one night when, as he parted from the company, he said:

"Yes, gentlemen, I'm proud to say it—I'm the father of two and twenty children born in lawful wedlock and of not one out of it."

When the door closed behind him, Harry Boleno,

who might, according to scandal, have recorded a precisely opposite experience, slapped his hand on his thigh and exclaimed in tones of heartiest admiration :

" Now, there goes what I call the model of a Christian gentleman ! "

Of other taverns, the haunts of literary convivialists, I have not left myself space to write ! There was the " Crown " in Essex Street, Strand, just opposite the Essex Head—now swept away—where the purveyors of boy's literature used to congregate and other free-lances of journalism. One at least of them has since risen to eminence both in politics and literature, and I daresay still retains pleasant memories of his comrades at the old tavern, who helped so largely towards providing the sinews of war for his first political campaign which resulted in his triumphant return at the head of the poll.

Then, there was the Plough Tavern in Museum Street where " readers " at the British Museum were wont to meet after the arduous labours of research. That hostelry still remains untouched by the hand of the destroyer, and its genial landlord, with his charming wife and daughter, dispense hospitality to the survivors of the old coterie that made the house lively in my Reading Room days. We used to have rare *causeries* there—what time George Barnett Smith, the many volumed man of letters, William Edward Church the ubiquitous " Urban," Tom Jerrold, the quaint and whimsical, picturesque old Percy St. John, whose romances have thrilled three generations of British boyhood, Shiel Barry whose wonderful creation of Gaspard, the miser, in Les Cloches de Corneville electrified London, Henry Loraine, the veteran Thespian (father of the actor-aviator), Eaton Walker, last of a brilliant band of old time artists, William Macdonald, brother of George the poet and novelist, Morgan Evans, the Welsh sonneteer, Charles Quin of the " Levant Herald," Arliss Andrew (" Adonis Evergreen "), Frank Compton Price, Hugh O'Neil, and other good Bohemians used to foregather

at the bar presided over by gracious and engaging Mrs. Carlton.

A prominent member of our coterie was a pure-blooded negro from Sierra Leone, the first of his race that ever took a degree at Oxford. He was a *protégé* of Gladstone's and of Dr. Bradley, Dean of Westminster, and I have often thought that he must have been the original of Grant Allen's striking story, "The Reverend John Creedy." For our coloured comrade, like Grant Allen's hero, "went Fantee"—in other words, relapsed into barbarism, despite the fact that he was a barrister and an Oxford B.A. It was a strange and sad case. The man had really some brilliant points about him—he had an undeniable gift of eloquence and an extraordinary memory. He could have reeled off for you, on the spur of the moment, a whole book of the Æneid or "Paradise Lost." When he first appeared in Court in his wig and gown there was a ribald cry from the gallery of "Who's the bloomin' Magpie?" and the contrast between the white wig and the black face was certainly suggestive of the pied colours of that bird. One evening, when I was coming along the Strand, I was startled to see in large letters on the placard of an evening paper the announcement, "A Black Barrister in the Dock." I knew it could only refer to my friend, and, on opening the paper, I read with pained surprise that he had been brought before the police magistrate on a charge of assault. He had, it appeared, stationed himself outside the "Maiden's Head" in Tottenham Court Road, with a bottle of rum in one hand and a glass in the other. He invited passers by to drink with him, and when they refused, threw the contents of the glass in their faces. He was, of course, in the end run in. He made a rambling speech in his own defence—a ludicrous mixture of eloquence and buffoonery—which, in the eyes of the magistrate, only aggravated his offence. He was smartly fined and jocularly paid the penalty. In fact, he treated the whole episode as a huge joke and was so proud of his own

performance that he collected all the reports of the case and showed them to his friends with humorous glee. But his grave and reverend patrons, Gladstone and Bradley, would have nothing to do with him after that escapade. He disappeared from ken, and, on inquiring after him one day, I was told that he had been seen down at the docks, bare-headed and bare-footed, clothed only in a ragged shirt and trousers, dancing native African dances among low dockyard loafers. All the instincts of civilisation and education had vanished; he had reverted to the primeval savage. A subscription was raised among us to ship him back to Africa, where his degradation would be less noticed than here. He elected to go to Zanzibar and died there of small-pox soon after his arrival. I think it was the most melancholy downfall that has come under my experience.

The Printer's Houses, the Ben Jonson in Shoe Lane and the White Swan in Salisbury Court, figured prominently in every journalist's experiences after the Early Closing Act which shut the public houses at half past twelve. There was no Press Club in those days, and Fleet Street pressmen used to meet, after their papers had gone to press, in one of those taverns which were opened at 2 a.m. for the benefit only of persons connected with newspapers. On Saturday mornings at 3 a.m. there was always a sing-song held at the Ben Jonson for the benefit of the Printer's Pension Fund—where the chair was usually taken by some member of the editorial staff of one of the great dailies or weeklies, and the hours were passed in becoming harmony and conviviality interspersed with music, speeches and recitations, until it was time for breakfast.

There was a Ben Jonson myth, at the tavern called after him, which I now almost regret that I was the means of exploding. For years beyond the memory of any one living, there had hung over the fireplace in the bar parlour a painting which had always been accepted as the attested portrait of rare Ben Jonson and looked

upon with appropriate veneration. It was a very dark Rembrandtesque picture and I had strong doubts of its genuineness. One morning I persuaded the landlord to take it down and let me examine it closely. I found that it was the portrait of a thin-visaged, black-haired man—with peaked beard—apparently of the time of Charles the First. Now Ben's hair was red and his face fleshy and pimpled and pock-pitten—there was not a single point in the portrait which bore the faintest resemblance to the description of Jonson given by his contemporaries. Whoever the original of the portrait may have been, it was certainly not Ben Jonson. Nevertheless the picture was undoubtedly old and deserved the respect due to age. But the landlord, a Scotchman, thought otherwise. He would have no cheats and impostures in *his* house, he said. He would not hear of restoring the portrait to its place of honour and when next I saw it—it was shoved away into a corner of the bagatelle room and the foot of some rude unfeeling sceptic had kicked a hole through the canvas. So vanished a tavern myth which had at least as much right to live as its brother myth at the " Cheese."

Ben Jonson's Head was a popular sign in London. I found on investigation that there were no less than eight then flourishing in different parts of London. And Heaven only knows how many " Cheshire Cheese's " there were! In my time there were four between Surrey Street, Strand, and Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, a distance of about a quarter of a mile.

And here, I may well close my recollections of tavern hours, for, though I have left many pleasant Bohemian haunts unnoticed, I am conscious of having devoted to this phase of my reminiscences more space than some will think it deserves. But in extenuation I would plead the important part which the tavern played in the lives of the Templars and journalists of my day. There was nothing to take its place as a resort for sociable souls. To-day there are a hundred and one

"Clubs," cheap and inexclusive, offering comfort and even luxury at cost price to suit all purses, all tastes and all grades. There was nothing of this sort in the days of which I have been writing. In default we patronized the inn-parlour—content with the good company and good cheer we found there. I doubt whether any up-to-date "Club" could better either the company or the cheer. But I am ready to admit that both Press and Bar may have benefited by the substitution of the milder and more decorous festivity of the "Club," for the Ishmaelitish jollity of the Tavern—albeit there be some, I think, who still sigh for the flesh-pots of Bohemia, the memory whereof hath a savoury and abiding relish.

IX

Among Bohemians

Where is Bohemia? Who and what are Bohemians? It is not easy to give a satisfactory definition in either case. One frequently reads in the Police reports of disreputable women who are described as "actresses" coming under the cognizance of the law. Presumably this is their own description of themselves and it is almost invariably untrue—a gross libel upon the ladies of a reputable profession. Similarly, there are ill-conditioned loafers and bounders, hanging on to the shabby skirts, the frowsy fringe of Society who call themselves "Bohemians" without the slightest right so to entitle themselves. The result is that Mrs. Grundy has come to regard Bohemianism as essentially disreputable—and not to be countenanced by any one with the slightest pretensions to a respectable social position.

But there is nothing disreputable about your true Bohemian. He is, indeed, tolerant of sinners and slow to judge them, yet is he no enemy to virtue, though she wear not, perhaps, the same shape to his eye as to the Puritan's.

Orthodoxy, conventionality and cant are anathema maranatha to him. He hates and despises them and wages war to the knife against all who rally round the banner of Philistinism and humbug. But he is not vicious—he does not revel in debauchery—he is not base in his ideals—he can rise to heights of altruism

unknown to his smug detractors. He will show you more of the true spirit of human fellowship and brotherhood in a day's casual wander through Bohemia than a month's search with a lantern would reveal to you in Philistia. There is nothing mean or sordid or ungenerous about him. He will share his last shilling with a chum. He is not ashamed to be seen even in Regent Street side by side with a pal in the seediest habiliments. He cares nothing for appearances. He is no respecter of persons. He has a hand open as day to melting charity and a heart that warms to beloved vagabondage, wherever he meets it. He loves the hand-to-mouth life, and takes no thought for the morrow. He does not always go about in rags. Despite his affinity to the gipsy and the nomad, you may trust him to keep his hands off your silver spoons, and he can, on occasion, be introduced even into polite society without risk of his grossly outraging the proprieties.

But stay! I feel conscious that my definition of the Bohemian is becoming as vague and verbose as Dr. Isaac Barrow's famous definition of Wit. One of the most delightful and brilliant Bohemians I ever met has pictured the elusive elements of Bohemianism far better than I can do, in the following charming verses :—

THE CITY OF PRAGUE.

Scene :—" Bohemia : a desert country near the Sea."

SHAKESPEARE.

* * * * * * *

I dwelt in a city enchanted,
And lonely, indeed, was my lot ;
Two guineas a week, all I wanted,
Was certainly all that I got.
Well, somehow I found it was plenty,
Perhaps you may find it the same,
If—*if* you are just five and twenty,
With industry, hope and an aim :

Though the latitude's rather uncertain,
And the longitude also is vague,
The persons I pity who know not the city,
The beautiful City of Prague!

* * * * * * *

Bohemian, of course, were my neighbours,
And not of a pastoral kind!
Our pipes were of clay, and our tabors
Would scarcely be easy to find.
Our Tabors? Instead of such mountains,
Ben Holborn was all we could share,
And the nearest available fountains
Were the horrible things in the square.
Does the latitude still seem uncertain?
Or think ye the longitude vague?
The persons I pity who know not the city,
The beautiful City of Prague!

* * * * * * *

How we laughed as we laboured together!
How well I remember to-day,
Our "outings" in midsummer weather,
Our winter delights at the play!
We were not over nice in our dinners;
Our "rooms" were up ricketty stairs,
But if hope be the wealth of beginners,
By Jove, we were all millionaires!
Our incomes were very uncertain,
Our prospects were equally vague;
Yet the persons I pity who know not the city,
The beautiful City of Prague!

* * * * * * *

If at times the horizon was frowning,
Or the ocean of life looking grim,
Who dreamed, do you fancy, of drowning?
Not we, for we knew we could swim. . .
Oh, Friends, by whose side I was breasting
The billows that rolled to the shore,
Ye are quietly, quietly resting
To laugh and to labour no more!
Still, in accents a little uncertain,
And tones that are possibly vague,
The persons I pity who know not the city,
The beautiful City of Prague!

* * * * * * *

L'ENVOI.

As for me, I have come to an anchor ;
I have taken my watch out of pawn ;
I keep an account with a banker,
Which at present is *not* overdrawn.
Though my clothes may be none of the smartest,
The " snip " has receipted the bill ;
But the days I was poor and an artist
Are the dearest of days to me still !
Though the latitude's rather uncertain,
And the longitude also is vague,
The persons I pity, who know not the city,
The beautiful City of Prague !

The man who wrote those lines, William Jeffery Prowse, was an ideal Bohemian—a " beloved Vagabond " if ever there was one. It was in the " Old Cheshire Cheese " that I used to meet him—and our talk was generally of cricket, of which we were both enthusiastic devotees. I have never met any one who could talk and write so brilliantly on cricket as " Jeff " Prowse. And yet his frail physique had, since his school days, when he was able to indulge in manly sports, debarred him from all active participation in the great game. It was one of " life's little ironies " that the soul of as ardent a cricketer as ever breathed should have been encased in a body incapable of any athletic exertion. He had imbibed this passion for cricket at his first school—the head of which, Mr. Wanostrocht, was one of the Immortals of the Cricket field—who, as " Mr. Felix," will live for ever in the annals of the game as one of its greatest exponents. It is odd that the two most enthusiastic lovers of cricket I have ever known were men to whom nature had cruelly denied the power to excel, or even engage in, the pastime to which they had given their hearts. The other was Edward O'Neil, brother of the once popular painter—Henry O'Neil, whose " Eastward Ho," and " Home Again," at the time of the Crimean War had an enormous vogue—and

the engravings of them had a place of honour in thousands of English homesteads. O'Neil was one of our little band of brothers on the "Theatrical and Musical Review," and was himself the author of one or two successful pieces on the stage. I chose him as cricket editor on the journal of which I was editor-in-chief, and it was his devotion to his duties that brought about his death. He sat out in the damp during a particularly wet Canterbury week—determined to see every ball bowled—caught a chill and died within a month—a martyr to duty and sport.

I had one delightful and never-to-be-forgotten afternoon with "Jeff" Prowse, at the Oval, when we yarned of cricket and cricketers, past and present, to our hearts' content. He was then a confirmed invalid—his pale, emaciated face with the sunken cheeks—throwing out into bolder relief the big, broad forehead—told of fatal disease. But his eye lightened and the colour flushed his features as he talked of the game he loved. Another topic on which he was almost fanatical in his enthusiasm was Arctic exploration, a subject which has interested me since my childhood. Here, too, we met on common ground. He told me that he thought he had in his library every book on Polar discovery that had ever been written. A friend of his once said of him that he believed the height of "Jeff's" ambition was to play a game of cricket on an Arctic ice-field with the Pole for a wicket!

Prowse's fame has been principally associated with his burlesque sporting articles in "Fun" under the *nom de guerre* of "Nicholas." The disreputable old sporting prophet was in his way a genuine creation of comic genius. There was a distinctly Falstaffian humour about "Nicholas" and with all his cunning and meanness one somehow had a sneaking affection for the old rascal. But, clever and original as his "Nicholas" was, "Jeff" was capable of far higher work than that, as his 'leaders" in the *Daily Telegraph*, and the fugitive

verses collected by his friend and editor, Tom Hood, amply prove.

Prowse was but thirty-three when he died of consumption at Cimiêz. How he was loved and missed by his brother Bohemians may be gathered from this passage in a letter to Tom Hood. "Poor Prowse! The best fellows I ever knew have had somebody who hated and privately abused them—*except Prowse.*" I wish I could convey some idea of his talk, which was even more brilliant than the "leaders" he wrote for the *Daily Telegraph.* I can only repeat what I have already said that "Jeff" Prowse will always live in my memory as one of the truest and most lovable Bohemians I have ever met.

I think almost, if not quite on a par with "Jeff," I should place "Ned" Blanchard whose kindly face and gentle manners are for ever associated with my recollections of the "Edinburgh Castle." Blanchard belonged to an older and harder phase of Bohemianism than Prowse. My old and intimate friend, the late William Edward Church, was one of Blanchard's closest pals, and from him I learned more of "Ned's" Bohemian adventures than from Blanchard himself, who was shy of reminiscing. Blanchard's experiences went so far back that his description of himself as the "Life in London" reporter for the "Town"—a humorous periodical started and conducted by the notorious Renton Nicholson, better known as the "Chief Baron" of the old "Judge and Jury" Club—sounds like a passage from Pickwick. "I was a slim young fellow then," said he, "and thought myself no end of a swell when I went out reporting, dressed up to the nines in a swallow-tailed coat, white duck trousers and waistcoat, and a glossy four-and-nine 'goss,' as the fashionable tile was then called." There was, of course, also the inevitable cane, of which Sam Warren gives such a graphic description in his picture of Tittlebat Tittlemouse starting out for his Sunday jaunt. The Bohemian journalist of Ned

Blanchard's early days required no elaborate outfit and could do his work under delightfully cheap and easy conditions. With a portable ink bottle in his tail pocket, a quire of paper, and a couple of selected quills carefully stowed in his breast pocket, he could stroll into the suburbs, choose his subject, retire into the solitude of some secluded bar, empty at that time of the day, or one of the little alcoves in the tea-gardens attached to all the old-fashioned suburban hostelries—and there, with a modest quencher by his side, reel off his " copy " in undisturbed quietude.

The pay of the journalist, however, was poor—degradingly poor. On one occasion, Blanchard ventured to impress this fact on his employer, one Joseph Last of Crane Court, the printer and proprietor of the newspaper for which he wrote.

"I don't dispute it, sir," said Last. "You send me a great deal of copy for fifteen shillings a-week. It's small pay, *but so regular*." The remark came on Blanchard like a revelation. Unable, on the spur of the moment, to dispute the assertion, he bowed and left Last's office.

Sauntering one summer day on the pavement before the " Edinburgh Castle," in the Strand, a year or two later on, the journalist met a small printer and publisher of Holywell Street, a Mr. Olinthus Bostock. " Good-day, Mr. Blanchard." The salutation was returned, and after some conversation the publisher said,

" I often wonder you waste so much time on newspapers and sporting prints. Why don't you try a novel, sir—something cutting and moral ? "

As Bostock averred that by writing a work of this description its author would infallibly make a fortune, Blanchard spent some days in Holywell Street devising a story at once thrilling and didactic, on the career of George Barnwell, the London apprentice hero of Lillo's homiletic tragedy. On a Saturday, Bostock entered the room in which the author was hard at work, and, with a rueful face, unburdened himself.

" I'm going to take a great liberty, Mr. Blanchard, but could you lend me a little money ? I only want a pound. My paper-merchant wants something on account, and until I pay a trifle he won't send me the ghost of a quire."

The budding novelist informed Mr. Bostock that he was " stumped."

" Have mercy on me, Mr. Blanchard ! You don't know the straits of mercantile men. You're at work in your shirt-sleeves ; let me have your coat and waistcoat to raise a few shillings on them. Sparks will soon close his warehouse, and if I don't work to-morrow we can't get the novel out next week, and I have no paper at all. Your things can be taken out a little after six, as my boy, Ezekiel, is going to bring home some money."

The author took off his waistcoat, and then Bostock hastily remarked,

" I am ashamed to make such a request, as you are so kind and affable, but could I beg your boots, too ! With an illustrated Bible upstairs and your things, I can easily get the sovereign."

" Have you a pair of slippers ? " asked Blanchard.

" No, but there's an old rug in the next room. Can't you rest your feet on that. I'll have everything out at the time I've named.

" Well, don't spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar," said Blanchard with a good-natured laugh. " Mind, boots, waistcoat, and coat by a quarter past six, as I have to get up to the Yorkshire Stingo to hear Bob Glindon and Kitty Tunstall sing."

Bostock went away, and some time elapsed before he again appeared. When he re-entered the room his demeanour was miserable in the extreme.

" Been a long time, Mr. Bostock. How have you got on ? " asked Blanchard impatiently.

" Awful, sir ; everything seems to go wrong. Sparks took the sovereign which I raised, but won't send any paper. Ezekiel has been disappointed, and I'm without

a shilling. Is there anybody you know that would advance a trifle? I'll go with pleasure to any one you name. I want a trifle so bad."

"Mr. Bostock, let us have no trifling. Go and get some money, and let me have my clothes."

"I could, if I had five shillings. Things are awful to contemplate. If Sparks had sent the paper, some of it might have gone for work. There's a man would lend me half-a-sovereign if I paid him back a crown I'm in his debt. He lives in Newcastle Street. As a last resource, Mr. Blanchard, will you let me have your trousers for an hour? Not longer. A crown will set me free till Ezekiel comes back from Cripplegate, where he's gone for £5. Let me have the trousers for an hour?"

"Do you think that I am going to be played with any longer, Mr. Bostock? My difficulties have always been great, but I'm not going to fight this ridiculous situation in a state of semi-nudity. Go out, and get relief somehow."

The hours rolled on, but no Bostock appeared, and the end of the matter was that Blanchard had to pass the hot night in the printer's stuffy, little office. On Sunday, at noon, he sent a messenger up with a note to a friend (Robert Cruikshank), who lodged in Lyon's Inn; but Cruikshank had been "passing the rosy," as Dick Swiveller would have put it, the night before, and was consequently so late in getting up that he did not reach Blanchard until the evening was far advanced. After an explanation, Bob went back to Lyons' Inn, obtained a watchman's thick great coat and a pair of huge carpet-slippers belonging to a laundress, and Blanchard, arrayed in this grotesque costume, stole out under the friendly cover of darkness, walked to and fro with Cruikshank on Adelphi Terrace inhaling the fresh air from the river. After this invigorating jaunt, they adjourned to the White Hart, Catherine Street, and supped. There Blanchard slept for the night, and that

was the last he ever heard of the novel that was to make his fortune.

Blanchard was sometimes in a delightfully reminiscent mood when he was alone with Church and myself at the "Edinburgh Castle," and then I have heard him tell some of the tragedies of his Bohemian life. One of these remains vividly impressed on my memory. In his impecunious days, when things were at their worst with him, when he had lost his engagement with the paper he was writing for, through the bankruptcy of the proprietor, he in "desperation" sent a contribution to the "Times." I think he knew one of the reporters of that journal, and had taken his place when he was seized with sudden illness. Anyhow Barnes, who was then editor of the "Times," sent him a note expressing his satisfaction at the work he had done, and adding that if Blanchard would come down on the following Sunday to see him at his house, in Notting Hill I think, he could probably put something in his way. Ned was so elated that he walked the streets with head erect, feeling himself a foot taller than any of the passers-by. He hardly knew how to contain himself till the eventful day arrived, the day which was to see the end of his troubles and worries and open to him the vista of a new life. He dressed himself carefully, and started off for the great Editor's house with steps light as air. He knocked at the door.

A man-servant came and looked at him with mingled surprise and indignation.

"I wish to see Mr. Barnes," said Ned confidently, "I have an appointment with him."

The man looked scared.

"Mr. Barnes!" he stammered. "Haven't you heard? *He died suddenly last night.*"

The blow was so stunning and stupefying that Ned was unable to grasp its meaning. He told us that he had no recollection of what immediately followed, till he found himself wandering by the side of the river—out

Chelsea way. How he got there he couldn't tell. For him the sun had gone out of the sky and it was night. Then despair took hold of him. The river was flowing at his feet—why not take a plunge beneath its rolling waters and so cut the Gordian knot? But the thought passed, he regained his humble lodgings and sat there alone in his dejection and despair, till he fell asleep from pure exhaustion. It was the most awful facer he ever received in his life. But he survived it, and when I knew him he was in fairly prosperous circumstances. For many years he wrote the annual pantomime for Drury Lane, with a graceful pen and a pretty fancy which captivated Londoners, and which children especially appreciated. It was his custom always to let my children know before any one else what the subject of his new pantomime was to be, and his kindly message to them set their hearts beating with eager anticipation of the good things in store for them when Father Christmas and "Mister" Blanchard joined hands on the stage of Drury Lane.

A gentler, kindlier, more lovable soul than Edward Laman Blanchard never roamed the dream-peopled streets of "the beautiful City of Prague."

A group of Bohemians with whom I occasionally consorted, mostly on first nights, included Joseph Knight, T. W. Robertson, Tom Hood, and Arthur Sketchley. Robertson had just emerged from the hard-up phase of Bohemianism when I knew him, and was as jolly a bon-vivant as one would wish to spend a merry hour withal. An intimate friend of mine was with him in his rooms when his first piece of good luck befel him—the announcement that the Haymarket had accepted his piece "David Garrick," written for Sothern. Forty pounds was all he received for it, but forty pounds was a very big sum to Tom Robertson at that time—a small fortune in fact—for his lot had been cast in stony ways, and he had drained the cup of poverty to the dregs. "If it only goes," he said in the exuberance of his first

delight at the news, " I'm a made man." It *did* go, and Sothern behaved very generously to him when the piece was an approved success. Soon after that, " Society," which had been rejected by every manager in London—one wrote " bosh " across the fly-leaf—found a home at last, and laid the foundation of the Bancrofts' fortunes at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, Tottenham Court Road. Robertson brought " the tea-cup and saucer " school of comedy, as its detractors derisively dubbed it, into vogue and "Ours," "Caste," and "School" secured him the fame and emolument for which he had long sighed in vain. It was hard upon him that, just as he had grasped all that made life worth living for, " that fell serjeant Death " should have tapped him on the shoulder and marched him off from the world which he had just begun to enjoy. He had only just turned forty when he died.

Tom Hood—so christened, his famous father was always *Thomas* Hood—I remember as a fine, handsome, bearded man, who used to complain that Fate had used him ill in forcing him to make a living by his pen when nature had given him all the instincts of a sportsman and an athlete. Having from his early youth to earn his bread by writing, he had no leisure to indulge in the manly sports for which his soul craved, and in which his splendid physique admirably fitted him to excel. And what a loathing he had for the comic " copy " which he was doomed to supply weekly to the public !

Arthur Sketchley, (whose real name was George Rose), I first met on an Ash Wednesday at Drury Lane Theatre. In those days the two " patent Theatres," Drury Lane and Covent Garden were closed for theatrical performances on Ash Wednesdays by order, I believe, of the Lord Chamberlain. I think all the other theatres followed suit, whether compulsorily or not, I forget. But there was held at Drury Lane a sort of variety entertainment which called itself a concert, but included a good deal besides music. On this occasion Arthur Sketchley gave one of his " Mrs. Brown " sketches. It

was in " Fun " I think, under Tom Hood's editorship, that " Mrs. Brown " first made her bow to the public, and became immediately popular. She was considered to be a not unworthy successor to the immortal Mrs. Caudle. Sketchley was even then growing portentously stout, in later years his proportions were elephantine, and he was quite unable to walk. He gave his " Mrs. Brown goes to an Evening Party " sitting, with a handkerchief spread over his knees, and his rendering of that loquacious lady's breathless monologue was very funny. It was far better than Dickens's Mrs. Gamp—one of the most disappointing of all his readings. Miss Poole, a charming vocalist, on the same evening, sang such good old ditties as " Wapping Old Stairs " in a sweet, simple style which fairly " fetched " the audience, and I think, but am not quite sure, that she was one of the little Bohemian supper party that met afterwards at Rule's in Maiden Lane and discussed oysters and stout. Sketchley was a true Bohemian and with his wheezy voice and huge quivering paunch, which heaved and shook with ventriloquial laughter, was a raconteur of the best. At any rate, the recollection of him at that supper at Rule's and on other similar occasions brings back a sense of gratifying amusement.

A good Bohemian of those days, too, was Tom Brett of the Chancery Bar—a brilliant scholar—a double gold medallist at Trinity, Dublin, a man of great ability, but handicapped by a pronounced eccentricity which spoiled his prospects of success in his profession. He was a comrade true as steel. A little man, not much over 5ft. 6in. and a light weight, he was the finest amateur boxer I have ever known. The sanguine complexion, the aggressive brush of red hair—the gold-rimmed pince-nez—the clever face—the wiry, hard-bitten frame with the slight stoop in the shoulders which took away from their breadth—how vividly they come before my mind's eye as I recall the days and nights he and I have spent in Bohemia! Many a time on Saturday nights

have we been together to the Blue Anchor in Shoreditch, where members of the Prize Ring most resorted, and put on the gloves with all and sundry. It was a rough crowd, but appreciative of merit, whether displayed by amateur or pro. We were both well-known to the big-pots of "The Fancy" and therefore secure from any molestation. Tom Brett, indeed, was a sort of "standing counsel" to the Prize Ring and was constantly consulted on points of law by pugilists, who had profound reverence for his legal learning. But his skill with the gloves would have commanded the respect of the professionals under any circumstances. He was extraordinarily quick on his feet and I never saw him bested by any professional of his weight—though the derisive cries of "Which is the hamatoor?" were calculated to put the professional on his mettle and even make him vicious. Brett was a fine swimmer, too, and used to do some mad feats in the way of shooting lashers and the like on the upper reaches of the Thames which more than once brought him within perilously measurable distance of a watery grave.

It was a frequent habit of certain Bohemians of the Temple, in those days, to close a nocturnal session in chambers by a proposal to go down to Billingsgate Fish Market and breakfast there. We used to purchase a huge cod, halibut or even turbot if funds would run to the latter—and have the same cooked in a coffee-house adjoining the market. What Gargantuan breakfasts those were! And then the coffee, laced with rum (save the mark!) with which the piscatorial banquet was washed down! What digestions we must have had! The bolder and hardier spirits would stroll leisurely westwards, after many pipes, take a plunge in the ice-cold water of the Old Roman Bath in the Strand, and turn up fresh and smiling in Chambers or in Court, bearing the delusive appearance of having gone virtuously to bed before midnight and slept the sleep of the just!

Another delightful series of Bohemian "outings"

which I recall is connected with a little coterie of about a dozen Templars who made a practice in the summer time of taking the river steamer down to Greenwich—on Saturday afternoons—and as soon as all the passengers had gone ashore having dinner, previously ordered, in the saloon, with all the ports open and a delicious breeze wandering through at its own sweet will. The caterer for our little "Below Bridges Club" was appointed every month and his business was to arrange the ménu with the steamboat people a day or two before, and inform them what number of guests they were to expect. I recall some very joyous Saturdays spent afloat with those Bohemian comrades.

It is perhaps needless to say, that impecuniosity was a chronic feature of the Bohemianism of my young days. We all suffered more or less from that "eternal want of pence that vexes public men" or what Theodore Hook called "tightness of the chest." And out of term time, when there were no dinners in Hall—there were gradations of feeding by which you could tell the state of a comrade's purse. When flush of funds, one would dine at Carr's, just opposite the Graphic Office in the Strand, where the "roast beef of Old England" (vide advertisements) "could be washed down with a bottle of excellent Beaune" for the modest sum of half-a-crown. The "Cheshire Cheese" and the "Mitre" were also tokens of one's being financially pretty near high-water-mark and the "Rainbow," too, with its wonderful Sunday dinner—turbot and saddle of mutton, as much as one liked of both, vegetables and cheese, for *two shillings!* Think of it! Where could you get such a dinner for the money nowadays! The next step was the "Portugal," in Fleet Street. To be seen dining there was a sure sign that funds were low. There was no need for explanation. If one met a pal at the "Portugal" one knew that he was in the same boat with one's self without need of any definite reference to the fact. The last step was Loveridge's—that meant extreme barrenness

of the exchequer—for one could dine there, everything included, for a shilling. I have known some Bohemians however, reduced to a still lower phase, a stand-up feed at the great ham and beef shop at the corner of Russell Street and Bow Street, the site of "Will's Coffee-house," whither all the wits used to resort in Dryden's and Addison's day. What magnificent joints of smoking hot boiled beef they had there! and what a liberal measure of potatoes, carrots and pease-pudding went to the nine-penny plate! It was filling at the price and no mistake. I suppose your gourmet would call this "stoking" not dining. There was certainly nothing Epicurean about these Bohemian feeds, yet a dinner of a dozen courses could not have more completely satisfied the appetite. There was no liquid refreshment, except water, to be had at the ham and beef shop, but one could step over the way to the Marquis of Anglesea and wash down the victuals with a tankard of ale. Are there any Bohemians of our sort still left, I wonder? Or do all the young Templars and journalists of Fleet Street banquet luxuriously at their clubs? The late Joseph Hatton once boasted in print that Bohemianism had so vastly changed that even the waiters who ministered now to the wants of Bohemians were often "tipped" with gold! But I think Joe must have squirmed at the caustic rejoinder which his boast evoked from the mordant pen of a master of ironic satire—William Mackay—who begged earnestly to know whether there were any chance of a vacancy among the happy waiters at these gilded haunts of Bohemians in clover.

A rare Bohemian was Tom Purnell whose pungent, witty and satiric articles on modern drama and dramatists over the signature of "Q" made the pages of the "Athenæum" very lively reading. With his curly black hair—just softly silvered—his handsome face and his picturesque head, Tom Purnell was a figure to attract attention anywhere. I have met few more brilliant talkers, when he was in the vein, and indeed there were

few more brilliant writers among his contemporaries, but he has left nothing behind him which affords any true index to his fine intellect. I found him a most congenial noctambulist and we had some notable nocturnal rambles when the frolic mood was on him.

One of these remains vividly painted on my memory. Big Ben had just chimed " the wee sma' hour ayont the twal' " when under a glorious moon we set out for Southwark bridge and traversed " Little Dorrit's " land, identifying with reverent care each sacred spot. Thence we wandered to Shakespeare's ground, by Bankside and Southwark, and the sites of the Globe and Blackfriars play-houses. I do not think that I ever realised the full beauties of the Thames by moonlight till I roamed along its haunted banks with Purnell. The old river is enchanting and romantic, beyond the power of words to describe in that sweet soft silver sheen. More beautiful even than under the opal lights of dawn, though that too is a wonderfully moving sight, seen as Wordsworth saw it, and as Purnell and I saw it, with the immortal sonnet on our lips and in our hearts, watching from Westminster Bridge the sun rise red over the dome of St. Paul's. Nor did I know what weird and ghostly silence reigns in the City at the dead of night, till, pilgrims to shrines of hallowed memory, Purnell and I woke the echoes of the deserted streets with footsteps that seemed almost sacrilegious in their breaking of the cloistered stillness. As a wholesome corrective to the sentiments engendered by such pilgrimages, we would turn into one of Lockhart's Cocoa Houses, sit cheek by jowl with breakfasting artisans and set the table on a roar. For Tom Purnell was a racy humourist—and I think it is the humour of him that gives a peculiar fragrance to the kindly and pleasant memories that crowd upon me, as I call up his picturesque personality from the shadows of the past.

Robert Williams, Lord Rosebery's private tutor—better known as " Bobbos "—was another brilliant

Bohemian. A Fellow of Baliol, a fine scholar, a wit, a bon-vivant, "Bobbos" was long a pillar of Fleet Street Bohemianism. His squat, thick figure and his untidy dress, the short black clay, its stem enwrapped in sewing thread, between his teeth—the curious squeaky voice—little led you to expect the intellectual pyrotechnics with which "Bobbos's" talk often coruscated.

He always enjoyed telling a story against himself, and the mention of his squeaky voice reminds me of one. "Bobbos" was a barrister as well as a journalist and man of letters, and had at one time a very fair practice at the Bar. On one occasion he was prosecuting counsel in a criminal case at the Old Bailey. The prisoner on being brought up to the dock from the cells, asked the warder who was for prosecution.

"Mr. Williams," was the reply.

The prisoner at once jumped to the conclusion that it was Montagu Williams, the famous criminal advocate.

"Muster Williams is it?" he growled in a dejected tone, "then I pleads guilty."

When he was placed in the dock and called upon to plead, the prisoner said sulkily:

"Guilty, my lord."

Up jumped "Bobbos" and in his thin, shrill tones began to address the judge.

The prisoner turned indignantly to the warder.

"Who's that little squeaky-voiced bloke?"

"Mr. Williams," said the warder.

"What! *'Im*, Muster Williams! I thought ye meant Muster Montagu. Plead guilty with that bally penny whistle a prosecutin', *not me!*" Then, turning quickly to the judge, he burst out.

"Not guilty, my lord, not guilty: I wasn't thinkin' o' what I was sayin'."

"Bobbos" was one of the ablest members of the *Daily Telegraph* staff at a time when a galaxy of talent made its "leaders" a joy to Londoners. I used to meet him at the "White Swan" in Salisbury Court after

our nocturnal journalistic labours were over about 3 a.m. and there we were often joined by Gilbert Venables of the *Standard*, a Bohemian brother as brilliant and accomplished as "Bobbos." And many a keen bout at dialectics have I enjoyed with those two. Venables had been a fine athlete in his youth and a mighty swimmer, but in diving at Oxford he struck a sunken pile and so seriously injured his spine that his lower limbs were completely paralysed for the rest of his life. He suffered chronic torture from pains in the head and from disease in the bones of his legs—often whilst he was talking, I have seen his face contorted with a sudden spasm of agony—yet he bore his torments manfully, and, but for those momentary twinges, which even *his* stoicism was not proof against, he never let you see what his sufferings were.

Another gallant Bohemian who kept a brave soul in a shattered body was W. E. Henley. Nature had apparently intended Henley for a career of vigorous activity, of bold adventure by land or sea—he should have been the hero of "moving accidents by flood and field; of hairbreadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach." But disease and the surgeon's knife had cruelly crippled his lower limbs and made locomotion a torture to him. You had only to look at the big-boned frame—the red hair and fighting face—to see that he was meant for something very different from the impotent creature on crutches that he was. He had the spirit of an old Buccaneer in him—he would have loved to have fought under Drake or Hawkins or Raleigh or even Dampier and Henry Morgan. A fierce and ruthless fighter he would have been. Even in these degenerate modern days he would have made a splendid war correspondent or an explorer of the H. M. Stanley type. As it was he laid about him with his pen. There is the soul of the fighter in all his work—both as poet and critic—in the latter capacity there was something almost of the swashbuckler about him. For he hit hard—hard as Hal o'

the Wynd, and his hitting was as fair as it was hard. I used to walk with him of a morning to Uxbridge Road Station—whence we both took train to town. He had been introduced to me by a lady who had known him in Edinburgh when he was in hospital there—what time he wrote the Sonnets that first brought him into notice. We had a bond of union in the fact that both of us had been pupils of Thomas Edward Brown, " T. E. B." the Manx Burns, and greatest of all Manxmen, dead or living. I had known " Tom " Brown, as he always was to me, from my early boyhood—Henley had been under him only for a short time at Gloucester, before " T. E. B." migrated to Clifton. And there was also another link of fellowship in the fact that I had known George Borrow and was, like the mighty " Lavengro," an enthusiastic admirer of the old Prize Ring. Of Brown, and Borrow and the old prize fighters we had much discourse in those far off days.

Henley loved fighting and fighters of all kinds more than any man I ever met. Part of his love and admiration for " T. E. B." was traceable to the fact that he had known Brown, as I had done, in the days when *he* was a fighter—as pugnacious as Huxley, to whom he bore some facial resemblance. It was gall and wormwood to Henley to read the sentimental gush over Robert Louis Stevenson's ill health and his valiant efforts to live and work in spite of it. For Stevenson's sufferings were as " moonlight unto sunlight and as water unto wine " compared with the diurnal pain Henley had to endure. That he should have endured it so heroically to the end and done such splendid work in defiance of it was a grand proof that the poet was indeed " The Master of his Fate, the Captain of his Soul."

One of the first little coteries of Bohemians to which I belonged, owned Walter Thornbury as its chief. We used to meet, after the theatres were over, in the White Hart Tavern, just opposite to the Strand Theatre. There were, besides, two admirable actors, David James

and "Bill" Belford, Henry Murray Scott (an old school fellow of mine and an exceptionally fine amateur singer), Harry Montague (the then Adonis of the stage) occasionally, and now and then, Sam Emery. We had supper in the little bar parlour—jugged hare was a favourite dish—and as there were no early closing hours, we talked on often into the small hours.

Walter Thornbury then held a high place among men of letters. His "Songs of the Cavaliers and Roundheads" and "Historical and Legendary Ballads" are as full of spirit as the "Lays" of Macaulay or Aytoun, and there is a swing in the metre that carries you off at a gallop. His face comes up before me out of the past as a soberly humorous one—grave and spectacled—but the eyes flashed bright sometimes behind the glasses, and, though he was never much of a talker, when he *did* take a hand in the conversation what he said was worth remembering. In days when the cigarette was deemed an effeminacy unworthy of a manly British smoker, Walter Thornbury smoked cigarettes incessantly. I am appalled now to think how many he must have consumed whilst we were puffing at our well coloured meerschaums or seasoned old briar-roots. Thornbury, though not of robust physique, was never in any hurry to go to bed and was always ready to join in any nocturnal ramble that might be suggested. Among other unaccountable excursions I remember four of us walking off at dawn on two occasions to Highgate Cemetery. Why so gloomy a goal should have been chosen for our pilgrimages I have not now the remotest idea, but the sweet morning air set our pulses tingling joyously, the pilgrimages were cheerful, enlivened with Chaucerian mirth and humour, and it was with glorious appetites that we sat down to a merry breakfast at the old Gatehouse. Of that little brotherhood of Bohemians who used to foregather at the Old White Hart in the Strand, I am the sole survivor. The venerable tavern, as old as Agincourt, has vanished too.

The company and the roof that covered them both gone! I think, with a sigh of Charles Lamb's lament :

> " I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
> Drinking late, sitting late with my bosom cronies
> All, all are gone, the old familiar faces ! "

There were two noted Bohemian clubs at that time, the Junior Garrick and the Savage of which the former was far and away the livelier. It has been dead for many years, but when I knew it, in its prime, it had the reputation of being the choicest Bohemian resort in London. There John Oxenford of the " Times " was a constant visitor with his satellite Fred Herbert, who stuck to him closer than a brother—" Lal " Brough, round whom there was ever a bubbling fountain of laughter—George Honey, most unctuous and racy of comedians, whose purple visage gave ghastly forewarning of the fatal heart disease which he knew would carry him off suddenly some day, as it did—Tom Thorne, of the gorgeous waistcoats, ere yet " Our Boys " had made his fortune—Henry James Byron, sometimes saturnine, sometimes gay—Tom Swinbourne, the heavy tragedian who played the King to Irving's " Hamlet " at the Lyceum, a typical actor of the old school—and Odell, the doyen of all living Bohemians, " himself not least but honoured of them all "—these are some of the figures that my memory calls up as I think of the Junior Garrick forty years back.

The Savage, which has since blossomed into a fame which far outshines that of any other Bohemian Club, I first knew when it was located in Evans's Hotel, next door to the famous supper rooms in Covent Garden. Millward and Vincent Boys and Harry Leigh, then known well as the author of " Carols of Cockayne " a charming and graceful verse writer, gentle and amiable " Willie " Dixon (" Hepworth's son ") and Andrew Halliday, playwright and litterateur, one of the mainstays of

Dickens's "All the Year Round," loom ghost-like out of the past, dim and shadowy memories of the early "Savage."

But I knew the Savage best when its home was at Haxell's Hotel in the Strand. Jimmy Albery whose "Two Roses" gave Irving his first great chance as Digby Grant and set his feet firmly on the ladder of fame—Charles Collette, bright, alert, well-groomed—Charles Kelly who brought a whiff of Harrovian prestige across the footlights—the three brilliant brothers Mackay, "Bill," "Joe" and "Wally"—Byron Webber sometime Autocrat of all the Savages, my good friend and colleague in more than one literary enterprise—but to go on merely enumerating in bald epitome the figures and faces that crowd upon my memory at the call of "Savage" would be to inflict on the reader something as tedious as Homer's catalogue of the ships.

One recollection of the Savage at Haxell's—not a very lively one—has somehow stuck in a corner of my memory. It is the picture of the club-room tenanted by two solitary members, Harry Leigh, standing on the rug in front of the fire, with a look of diabolical malignity on his never very amiable face, glaring fiendishly at the piano in the far corner of the room, where Pat Macdonald, a gifted but eccentric Scotch barrister, was grimly playing Gaelic coronachs and other funereal strains with intent to wreak vengeance on the author of "Carols of Cockaigne" whom he hated and who returned his hatred with interest. If you entered the Savage about eight o'clock in the evening you generally found it in possession of those two implacable foes—for it was not till the theatres were over that the members gathered in force. Macdonald was an extraordinary man. He was believed generally to have slept o' nights in the four wheeler which was chartered to take him home from the Savage—for, as his incoherent instructions to the cabby were to drive till he was told to pull up, it was presumed that the vehicle rumbled along the streets for hours—in fact

till Pat *did* awake and, dismissing the cab, went home, washed, dressed and breakfasted and appeared in Court at ten o'clock, clearheaded, sober, fresh, capable of handling with remarkable ability whatever case he might be engaged in.

Odell, of course, was then, as he has been always, a member of the Savage. I have paced the streets of London with him and Charles Stephenson, the actor, what time the sun was first glinting on the cross of St. Paul's and never noticed how the hours were passing till hospitable early taverns offered the matutinal rum and milk. I had one nocturnal tramp with him which was recalled to me very strangely in a remote part of the kingdom, where one would think the very name of the Savage Club was unknown. I had been staying at Bridgend in the island of Islay and had come over to Port Ellen to catch the steamer the next morning. There was a little party of golfers in the hotel—Horace Hutchinson, I think, was one of them—all unknown to me. When I came into the smoking-room after dinner they were gathered round the fire—but, as the night was warm, I took a seat at a distance from them. To my surprise, I presently heard one of them, a fashionable London West End dentist, telling stories of the Savage Club and among them this nocturnal adventure of mine with Odell. The narrator mangled the story so dreadfully that I could not sit still and listen to such a travesty of the truth. On pretence of getting a light from the mantel-piece I approached the group.

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen, for interrupting you, but I could not help hearing what this gentleman has just told you in reference to the Savage Club, and one of its most distinguished members. As I happen to be the person who was Mr. Odell's companion on that occasion, perhaps you will allow me to correct some mistakes in the narrative."

And then I told them the true story—after which we made a jovial night of it. I parted from them the next

morning off the island of Gigha—they were bound for Macrihanish, a name dear to every golfer, I, to Loch Tarbert on my way to Rothesay. I have never seen any of them since. But it was an odd experience hearing an adventure of my own narrated by a stranger in an hotel in the far Western Hebrides!

There was another coterie of wandering Bohemians which I must not forget to mention—the Oasis Club. It was on an evening in the January of 1880 that David Christie Murray, with whom I had been dining at the Gaiety to celebrate our joint good fortune in connexion with "Chambers's Journal," took me to Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, where the Oasis, which had no fixed abode, was to meet that evening. And then I was duly initiated as a member, with the appropriate ceremonial, one grim feature of which was the draining at a draught of a liberal measure of Scotch whisky from a human skull! Among those present were "T. P." the brothers Barnett, Eugene and Reginald, merry Frank Marshall, mercurial Charley Findlay and above all, Dr. Connor, whose impersonation of the "Passions" was supremely funny. His head was thrust through a sheet which concealed all the rest of him, and on his great, red, hairless face were delineated with wonderfully mobile facial expression, "Love," "Hate," "Envy," and the whole list as given in Collins's classic Ode. The expression of "Love" was so ludicrous that I still laugh whenever I recall it. It was a rule of the Oasis that every contribution to the evening's entertainment must be the original work of the contributor. I recall with amusement a remarkable ditty, words and music by the brothers Barnett. It was called, "In the Strand," and recounted the temptations to which innocent curates are exposed during the May Meetings. The Oasis held its re-unions in winter at the rooms or chambers of various members. In the summer, the club assembled at picturesque old country inns, generally up the river, and had such good times as must have left pleasant memories behind them.

A jolly brotherhood, long since dispersed: most of them, I think, gone over to the majority, but a remnant still survives.

But chiefest and best beloved of all Bohemians I have known, was my old friend and comrade, William Edward Church, whom all "Urbans" revere as the most eloquent, accomplished and popular Honorary Secretary they have ever had. It was at the house of Lawrence Gane, subsequently Q.C. and M.P., on Cathcart Hill, that I first met Church, after we had both been assisting at an entertainment. It was a June morning and the sun had just risen when we started to walk down the Caledonian Road towards the Temple. It had somehow come out that I knew George Borrow personally—this enlisted Church's interest at once, for he was a worshipper of "Lavengro." We talked of Borrow, discovered that we both were "Children of the Open Air," and we parted—*friends*. From that time till his lamented death, two and forty years later, there was no break in our intimate friendship, nor did the slightest cloud ever throw a moment's shadow over it. I have met no better talker than William Edward Church. His knowledge of English literature was intimate and wide. He was a walking anthology, for his marvellous memory enabled him to illustrate his allusions to any author by copious quotations, rendered with a grace and expression which I have seldom known equalled. At every Bohemian gathering in London, of literary men or artists, he was a welcome and honoured guest—for he could talk as well on art as on literature. He was the centre of attraction wherever he might be, and the ablest men in London, physicians, scientists, artists, men of letters, listened to him with delight. But he was no arrogant monopolizer of conversation—though he could not help knowing what a charm and fascination there was in his voice—he simply talked because everyone encouraged him to talk and hung rapt on his lips.

What pilgrimages he and I have had together! He

knew London by heart—there was not an antique corner with historical or literary associations that I have not explored with him. At the picture galleries he was the most perfect cicerone I have ever met with. To go over the National Gallery or Hampton Court, or the dear old Dulwich gallery with him was a liberal education in art. And to what queer Bohemian coteries he introduced me —real Bohemians—brothers of the pen or pencil—round whom floated an atmosphere of high intelligence! Our Saturday tramps into the country were "outings" of the sort that Jeff Prowse recalls with gusto in his "City of Prague." There was not an old church or an old inn in Middlesex that we did not explore. Essex and Kent too, saw us roaming their roads and bye-lanes. We knew Gadshill and all the scenes redolent of Barnaby Rudge. We had our adventures, too, some of them exciting, but most of them serio-comic, the remembrance of which raises the ghost of "Laughter holding both his sides."

Weirdly and grotesquely unconventional were some of the episodes in our Bohemian wanderings that memory brings back to me. "What things we have seen and done together, brother," when the wind was on the heath and the call of the Romany drew us to the wilds, to put on the Borrovian shapes of Jasper Petulengro and Tawno Chikno.

We have mingled with outcasts and night-birds and studied London's seamy side in the flare of steamy coffee-stalls. We have drawn lore and legend from bashful yokels in the tap-rooms of roadside inns and eke have made them listen with mouths agape. We have cheered the seedy Thespians of "Poverty Corner" with pots of "heavy wet" and tales of sock and buskin. We have supped with police-officers in mufti, breakfasted with cabmen in their "shelters," hobnobbed with tradesfolk at their beanfeasts and shared with festive printers the revels of the Wayzgoose—we have seen life together in every phase from broadcloth and polish to fustian

and frowsiness—from patrician Mayfair to proletarian Mile End. But most we loved the freshness and the freedom of the open countryside—the lanes and meadows and woodlands of Middlesex and Essex—where, rhapsodizing over Nature and the poets, we could " fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world."

For five and twenty years we planned our winter lecturing campaigns together and mapped out tours over the country from Cornwall to Caithness.

In his own city " The Pilgrim of London " had a great following. There must be hundreds of Londoners familiar with that slight, well-knit figure—the bright quick-glancing eyes, the look of keen intelligence, the clear-cut features, the finely shaped head. It is but two years since my old friend died, a Brother of the Charterhouse, and I have hardly yet quite realised that we shall never more meet on this side the Styx.

There comes to me, as I think of him,

> " That ' Ave atque Vale ' of the Poet's hopeless woe,
> " Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hundred years ago,
> " Frater Ave atque Vale ! "

When a man quits " the stir of Babel " for the " sweet solitudes " and silences of Arcadia he can hardly hope to keep touch with old Bohemian comrades. They become, like the survivors of the " Six Hundred," an ever lessening band. Death claims some—Philistia others (I pity them), grown ashamed of their sometime sojourn in the " City of Prague." They muster but a scanty company, the veterans of the Old Guard who remain staunch to the colours. I reckon myself happy in still knowing some of these, among them, to be counted now on the fingers of one hand, the dearest friends I have. Rarely, too rarely, do I see their faces and hear their voices. But I know that *they*, if none else, will understand the spirit in which I write, and the shade of melancholy which tinges my thoughts, as, sitting here

alone, far from all sound of urban life, I live in the past again and conjure up the ghosts of old Bohemians with whom I have laughed and quaffed and held blithe converse in the days that are no more. But I am no friend to Melancholy. I do not court her company. It is with L'Allegro, not with Il Penseroso, that I choose to live.

"Fill up the lonely glass and drain it
In memory of dear old times;
Welcome the wine, whate'er the seal is,
And sit you down and say your grace
With thankful heart, whate'er the meal is."

THE END.

William J. McKenzie, The Devonshire Press, Torquay.

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